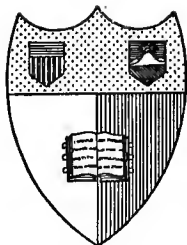


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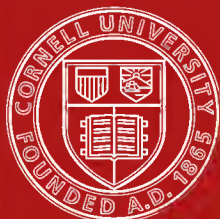
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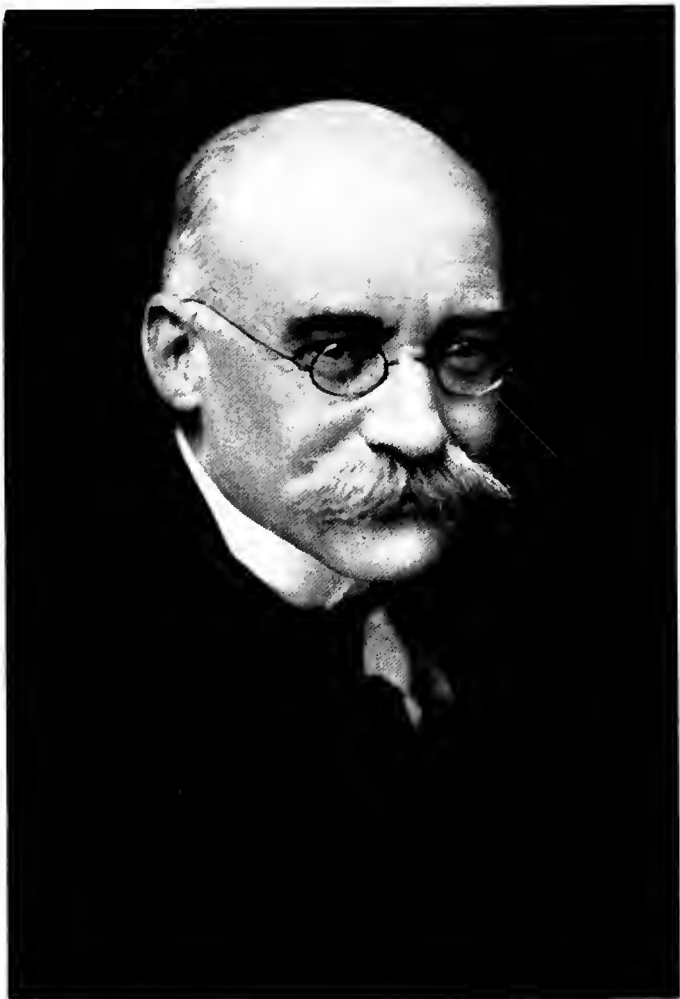


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H. G. HIBBERT

A . PLAYGOER'S MEMORIES

BY

H. G. HIBBERT

AUTHOR OF

"FIFTY YEARS OF A LONDONER'S LIFE"

PREFATORY NOTE BY
WILLIAM ARCHER



WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO
MARIE LÖHR

PREFACE

LONDON, 23rd September 1920.

MY DEAR HIBBERT,

I don't know why you should apply to me for a foreword to your book on the inner history of the late Victorian and Edwardian stage, unless it be for the reason that no one else in the theatrical world is so ignorant as I of the said inner history. I have never in my life been in a green-room—does such a thing exist nowadays?—and at theatrical clubs I have been a very infrequent and somewhat *dépaycé* guest. Therefore I could as easily have written a book on Einstein's Theory of Relativity as on the subjects which you handle with such suave and humane omniscience. I suppose, then, that you apply to me as the least expert and the most appreciative reader you can find. You know how I delighted in your *Fifty Years of a Londoner's Life*, and you make with confidence a second appeal to my interest in the men and women whom I have hitherto known only, or mainly, as actors and actresses.

Your confidence is well founded. I have read your book with the keenest interest, and I fully understand and share that mood of pensive melancholy which runs through so many of its pages. We shall be set down, I dare say, as puling sentimentalists when we shed "tears, idle tears" over those tragedies of the stage which are enacted wholly *dans les coulisses*, and of which, very often,

no rumour reaches the public. We shall be told that a solicitor or a stockbroker, looking back over half-a-century of his professional life, would have just as good right to wax maudlin over the vicissitudes of fortune he had witnessed and the inevitable casualty-list of the battle of life. But, with all respect to the solicitor and the stockbroker, there is a very real difference between the cases. A glamour hangs about the stage which is, to say the least of it, not equally perceptible in the purlieus of Lincoln's Inn and London Wall. Antithesis, contrast, has been from of old one of the most impressive figures in the rhetoric of life; and while we are human we cannot but be sensitive to the contrast between the glitter of the footlights and the pauper's cubicle or the suicide's grave. To pass from the solicitor's office to the tomb is only to pass, quite literally, from dust to dust; very different is the transit from the factitious, hectic vitality of the stage into the squalor of poverty or the "cold obstruction" of death. A theatre always seems to me, as I am sure it seems to you, like a richly-coloured meerschaum, impregnated with the essence of countless hopes and dreams, triumphs and disasters. Like you, I cannot go to any of the older playhouses of London without being haunted by troops of ghosts, both before and behind the curtain. With a gentle and sympathetic conjuration, you have summoned up some of these spirits and made them defile across the gauze-hung stage of memory, commenting the while, without either cynicism or censoriousness, upon their splendours and their miseries. There is nothing of the scandalous chronicle in your reminiscences. Sometimes, indeed, you drop the curtain, with tantalising discretion, just when our curiosity is at

the keenest. But, when in doubt, it is far better to say too little than too much. I am sure you have proceeded on that principle, and it has helped you to produce a uniformly urbane and attractive book.

Some of the people of whom you treat ranked high among my pet aversions. But as you revive them for me in the magic twilight of the past, I forget what I have endured at their hands, and think of them with compassion, not as bad artists, but as struggling, aspiring, suffering human beings. Did I, in their lifetime, ignore their humanity, and tell the brutal truth about them? I sincerely hope not. A piece of bad acting is, after all, such an ephemeral thing that (unless there are aggravating circumstances, such as grave injustice to an unfortunate author) it is mere cruelty to stick a pin in it and preserve it in a museum. Let criticism do the little it can to embalm the memory of fine acting, and suffer the rest to pass unchronicled into oblivion.

I can only applaud, therefore, your abstention from any attempt to range your subjects in an order of merit, or to distribute æsthetic praise and blame. You are concerned with the stage, not from the artistic, but from the purely human point of view; and there is as much human nature in a leg-show as in a Shakespearean tragedy. The tragedy, indeed, deliberately sets forth to remind us of the pitfalls that beset our path in life. It is, so to speak, self-consciously pathetic. How much more poignant is the unconscious pathos of the gaudy, glittering, jigging and jazzing operetta, with its "beauty chorus," its bouncing comedians, and its idolised *prima donna*, the goddess of a few lime-lit hours! It is not at the St James's or the Hay-market, but at Daly's and the Hippodrome, that I,

for one, am apt to be haunted by the refrain: "Into the night go one and all."

Deep as is my ignorance of the intimate history of the stage, there are one or two points where I am tempted to add a footnote to your records. For example, in speaking of the Kingsway as a "house of many mutations" (p. 225), you do not mention that it was the scene of the first serious introduction of Ibsen to the British stage. In those days (7th June 1889) it was known as the Novelty Theatre. The play was *A Doll's House* and the Nora was that brilliant but ill-starred actress, Janet Achurch, who ought to find a place in any future "Legend of Fair Women" that you may compile. That short season was certainly, in its consequences, the most memorable of all the vicissitudes through which the Kingsway has passed. The same boards, too, witnessed the latest Ibsen performances—a revival of *Ghosts* in 1917. Miss Darragh, who made perhaps the greatest success of her career as Mrs Alving, succumbed to an operation within a few weeks of the end of the run. "Into the night go one and all." Yours very sincerely,

WILLIAM ARCHER.

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CHAPTER I

“OUR BOYS”

“This cursed nonsense will not run a week”—A Record of One Thousand Three Hundred and Sixty-Two Performances—Theatre Rents in the Seventies—*Our Boys*’ Earnings—Some Byron *bons mots*—A Cast o’ertaken by Tragedy

“THIS cursed nonsense will not last a week.” Such, somewhat expurgated, is said to have been Charles Warner’s comment on *Our Boys* after a reading interrupted by one outbreak of silly laughter in the wrong place. Byron, suffering from the harsh cough that warned him already of the illness painfully leading to his death five years later, sipped his brandy and water, and remarked that it was stronger than, apparently, the play was.

Our Boys had the unprecedented run of one thousand three hundred and sixty-two nights; it has been again and again revived; it still meanders among the amateurs, yielding a little income to Byron’s surviving daughter. This amateur traffic, by the way, is incredible. French’s, from their million stock of plays, supply as many as five hundred applicants in a day, and pay thousands a year to authors for otherwise unconsidered dramatic trifles.

Of course the “run” of *Our Boys* has often, meanwhile, been o’ertopped. But it must be remembered that all the conditions of play-going are now

improved, that the *matinée* was unknown, and that provincial and world touring was in its infancy.

Our Boys was produced at the Vaudeville Theatre on 16th January 1875. To-day you may take up the thread in a Buckinghamshire garden. Windsor Castle is silhouetted against the sky. A dear, white-haired lady plucks a dead leaf from a rose-tree, and proudly tells you that she sent more eggs to stricken soldiers than she registered appearances as Violet Melrose! A few years ago Kate Bishop quietly left the stage she had adorned for fifty years. Trained to it from childhood by her mother, the sweetest *ingénue* of a generation is now content to watch with love and admiration the career of her own daughter, Marie Löhr; and to busy herself on her tiny farm.

Strange coincidence that Kate Bishop should be in Australia when the associate of her girlhood, Amy Roselle, died there in such tragical circumstances. Strange that her stage lover too, handsome, exuberant Charles Warner, should die by his own hand in America. Strange that one of the partitioners in a huge fortune made out of *Our Boys* should die in middle age, leaving upwards of £40,000, while the other, verging on eighty, lingered in a public institution, mentally deranged.

It was recently in order for the Vaudeville Theatre—so named, no doubt, because nothing in the nature of a *vaudeville* was destined to occupy its stage, for *vaudeville* is a very definite form of French dramatic art—to celebrate its jubilee. It was built for three popular favourites of the day—David James, H. J. Montagu and Thomas Thorne—and opened in



MISS KATE BISHOP
THE ORIGINAL VIOLET MELROSE IN "OUR BOYS"

THEATRE RENTS IN THE SEVENTIES 19

April, 1870. The new firm was quickly named in Bohemian circles, "The Jew, the Gent, and the Gentile." James, a popular favourite in burlesque at its real home, the Strand, was actually Belasco. "Handsome Harry" Montagu had been the "leading juvenile" with the Bancrofts. Thorne was James's companion at the Strand, though the intimacy of the three men began twenty-five years earlier, at Sadler's Wells.

Wybrow Robertson, a person of importance in the theatrical world then—he married the beautiful Miss Litton, and projected the Westminster Aquarium—built the Vaudeville, on a site absorbing the offices of *The Glow-worm*. It is unique in having had but two lessees—allowing for the mutations of the James-Thorne-Montagu partnership. In 1891 the Gattis became the proprietors of the Vaudeville, which they never let outright, preferring to retain an interest in the productions there. If it were in the market to-day it might command a rental of £400 a week—aggregating in a year a sum probably equal to that expended on its original structure. For years the rental nominated for accountancy purposes was £200 a week. Twenty years ago it was £60 a week. I do not suppose it cost James and Thorne £50 a week.

Their plan was to do burlesque—a short burlesque and a short comedy was the conventional programme of the day. But their beginning was unfortunate. Albery's *Two Roses* was their first success, as it was that incorrigible Bohemian's one remarkable play. He was one of the party that used to drink small and

dewy cups in the long-demolished Albion Tavern, Drury Lane. Another of the group was Henry Irving, who to the end of his days loved late hours, and who incidentally made so great an impression as Digby Grant in *Two Roses* that Colonel Bateman tempted him round the corner to the Lyceum and so began a most important chapter in the history of the English stage. Albery got a good connection as an adapter of French farce. He was Mary Moore's first husband, and in his *Little Miss Muffit* she made her debut as a regular actress.

Montagu soon quarrelled with his partners, and became manager of the Globe. He did not succeed; accepted an American engagement, and died in the United States. Actually *Our Boys* was written for him, and Sam Emery, a popular comedian of the time—there have been five generations of Emerys on the stage—was the selected Middlewick. But Byron eventually took his play to the Vaudeville, where he narrowly escaped selling his manuscript outright for a few hundred pounds, according to the custom of the time. He took a weekly fee of, I believe, twenty pounds. That would mean no more than a few thousands, though he made a better deal in regard to the country rights. It is not too much to say that an author who could produce the counterpart of *Our Boys* to-day would be in clear view of £100,000.

William Duck, who first leased and then bought outright for £1000 the provincial rights, afterwards all rights remaining, probably made the largest fortune of all. He was a common, illiterate man,

who, having purchased busts of Shakespeare and Milton for his drawing-room, returned them to the itinerant vendor when the unhappy Italian tendered a third of Byron—"Not a damned bit like him," as Duck roundly swore. At Plymouth he told the dramatist that he had "been for a walk round the 'oe." Said Byron: "Try one round the aitch for a change."

One of his best *mots* was uttered on his death-bed. His groom, reporting the illness of a horse, "thought he would give the sufferer a ball." "Ye-es," said Byron; "but don't ask too many people." He comforted a sandwich-man complaining of poor pay with the reminder that he "got his board." Byron died a poor man; nominally, he left £4200. But probate figures are apt to be so deceptive. He had speculated unsuccessfully in theatrical management. He had been generous. But especially he had an expensive mania for changing his residence, and not infrequently was paying rent for four abandoned houses. His habit of word contortion, or punning, in burlesque is tiresome to us now, and seems laborious, but it was natural to him. His humour is homely, and even vulgar. His characters are mostly conventional creatures of the stage. But he never set up a suggestive situation, or wrote an indecorous line.

On the same day, 10th April 1884, died, well advanced in years, another dramatist, novelist, grim humorist and social reformer, Charles Reade.

Byron was already an author of renown when he wrote *Our Boys*. He was forty, but he had nearly a hundred plays to his credit, mostly burlesques.

There is not a classical story, nursery tale, opera or drama to which he has not applied a sacrilegious pen. In his youth he coquetted with medicine, became a barrister, journalist, actor, novelist. He was the first editor of *Fun*, the only effectual rival of *Punch*. His intermittent appearances on the stage were mostly in his own plays—the most remarkable, Charles, in *A Fool and his Money*; the last as the war correspondent, in Jules Verne's *Michael Strogoff*, at the Adelphi. He rejected make-up, and would step from a cab on to the stage, a tall, handsome, heavily moustached man, who was hardly ever known to lose his temper, who was universally beloved for his charm and for his ready wit.

James when he separated from the Vaudeville accepted engagements here and there—he returned to his first love, burlesque, in *Jack Sheppard*, at the Gaiety. He died in middle age, leaving £41,594, most of which, no doubt, he made out of *Our Boys*. His long-time partner continued in management—to a disastrous end. Poor Amy Roselle!

Arthur Dacre, her husband, was a medical man in early life and never really distinguished himself on the stage. He belonged to a little group of men remarkable for their physical attractiveness, and known as stage beauties. There was “Handsome” Harry Conway, “Handsome” Jack Barnes, Kyrle Bellew and Dacre. Barnes has had the rare art of bending to the years—he is one of our finest actors of old men. All the rest are dead—Dacre by his own hand, the victim of inordinate vanity.

Amy Roselle, who in childhood had shared the

triumphs of her diminutive brother, Percy, the Master Betty of his day, was still an actress of a certain consideration. But Dacre stubbornly contended for the position of joint "stars." Their circumstances here became deplorable. In Australia they seemed to be on the eve of better things—it is untrue that they were in distressed circumstances when, in November, 1895, the whole world was shocked by the news that Dacre had, after deliberate agreement, cleanly shot his wife. He then apparently lost his nerve. His own bullet missed a vital part. He clumsily cut his throat, standing at the mantelpiece moaning: "Oh, the pain! the pain!" He died shortly after the horrified servants of the hotel in Sydney broke into his room.

William Farren had joined the Vaudeville company for intervening revivals of *The School for Scandal* and other comedies of that kind. In his youth a hard, unappellant actor, he developed into a comedian of consideration when he succeeded to the series of characters with which his father, the real "Old" Farren, had been identified. It became a convention to speak of him as the last embodiment of the traditions of eighteenth-century comedy. Not so! That honour belonged to Lewis Ball, Phelps's stage manager and friend, in the long autumn and crisp winter of his life the mainstay and preceptor of the Compton Comedy Company; the best Sir Peter Teazle I ever saw.

Farren had the reputation at the Vaudeville of cantankerousness and penurious habit. He always played the last act with as much of his stage gear

removed as possible, his man waiting at the wings with greatcoat and rug so that he might make a bolt for his suburban train at Charing Cross and so save a cab fare!

Of other women there were two—Sophie Larkin, the Clarissa Champneys, who came from the home of Robertson comedy, the Prince of Wales's, her ugliness beatified by good humour and bright black eyes; and Cicely Richards, just emancipated from the wardrobe to play her first part, as Belinda, which she was encouraged by the kindly Byron to expand into a study that Dickens might have fathered. And there was William Lestocq, now the faithful guardian of the Frohman interests, promoted from the rank of a super at eighteenpence a night to that of a footman at twenty-five shillings. For the Vaudeville management was economical, though it did burst out into champagne each fiftieth night and massive gold lockets on the hundredth. *Our Boys* had a keen admirer in the then Prince of Wales. He visited the Vaudeville on the eve of his departure for India and immediately after his return. “Do you think,” petulantly retorted an actor reproached with forgetting his lines, “that we can remember the damned thing for ever?” He was released on 18th April 1879.

CHAPTER II

OPÉRA BOUFFE

The Coming of Offenbach—*La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein*—Hervé at the Lyceum—*Chilperic*—Some Popular *Prime Donne*—All the World at Islington—Florence St John arrives—And Arthur Roberts

WHENEVER two or three playgoers gather together someone is sure to wonder why the old operas are not revived, and another to remark in explanation that the “books” were so bad! It seems to be overlooked that revivals of *opéra bouffe* have had a very fair trial. Quite recently, at Drury Lane, Sir Thomas Beecham did *La Fille de Madame Angot*, with a brand-new libretto by a distinguished *littérateur*. I do not believe he found much satisfaction in the result. At the Ambassadors Mr Charles B. Cochran introduced to revue a generous selection from old-time favourites. Hundreds of letters reached him from grateful enthusiasts, but they were marked “private,” and not addressed to the box office. Sir Oswald Stoll tried a similar experiment at the Coliseum, but very soon desisted. One remembers a more serious effort at the Garrick, engaging Florence St John; others at the Gaiety and at the Criterion; and an earlier one by Edward Saunders at the then distinguished Coronet Theatre, with that experienced veteran, Richard Mansell, at

his right hand. It was interesting, but costly. There are on my book-shelves many volumes that I love, and sometimes dust, but never dare reopen. I think the *opéras bouffe* that enchanted us in youth were better treated as sacred memories now.

Casual writers speak of Mansell's production of *Chilperic* at the Lyceum in 1870 as the starting-point of *opéra bouffe* in England. Not so! Planche, in 1865, found some material in Offenbach's work for *Orpheus in the Haymarket*, and Burnand in Hervé's *L'Œil Creve* for *Hit or Miss*; or, *All my Eye and Betty Martyn*, in 1868. There were interesting seasons of opera in French at the St James's—which absorbed a liberal sowing of wild oats ere the efflorescence of “the beautiful” Miss Herbert, of Hare, of the Kendals, of Alexander. In its foundations you may still find the cages of performing lions. Here the first Christy Minstrels drew tears to the eyes of William Makepeace Thackeray—facts over which Alexander unnecessarily drew the curtain of shame in his history of the theatre. Schneider played the Grand Duchess at the St James's, dancing the *can-can*, and Descauzes played Madame Angot.

In fact the first serious production of *opéra bouffe* in English was that of *The Grand Duchess* at Covent Garden by the elder Augustus Harris in 1867. Mrs Howard Paul, Julia Matthews, and Emily Soldene, who had just descended from the concert platform to become a music-hall favourite as Miss Fitzhenry, were, in succession, the representatives of her eccentric highness. Then came *Barbe Bleue*, in which, at the Gaiety in 1870, Julia Matthews played

Boulotte—a second time, to be succeeded on tour by Emily Soldene. It importantly occurs that parallel with the long line of successful operas runs a long line of popular favourites—as, Julia Matthews, Emily Soldene, Selina Dolaro, Kate Santley, Constance Loseby, Corneille D'Anka, Kitty Munro, Florence St John and Violet Cameron. They were nurtured in the atmosphere of *opéra bouffe*—to which Sir Thomas Beecham's academic artists seemed strange in the recent revival of *Madame Angot*. So, too, were the comedians—the Marshalls, the Mariuses, the Paultons and the Coxes.

Soldene got a late-life reputation as a vivacious writer, mostly of reminiscences. A benefit was managed for her at the Palace Theatre by Mr Richard Northcott, to whose invaluable brochures on composers one is so deeply indebted; and with the £1000 it raised she went to friends in Australia, but she returned to die in London, at seventy-two, and is buried at Shirley, near Croydon.

In the early seventies the Mansells ran the Lyceum. They were Irishmen, of a good family, Maitland by name. They were absolutely irresponsible. Later at the St James's Theatre Richard Mansell got into trouble with the Lord Chamberlain about some scanty frocks and an indecent dance in *Vert-Vert*. He was impudent, and promptly lost his licence, the Lord Chamberlain informing the culprit that he had added a note to the record which would prevent any succeeding Lord Chamberlain from removing the ban. Poor "Dick" Mansell found this was quite true!

When *Chilperic* was done at the Lyceum the composer, Hervé, an elegant, irresistible creature, played the hero, making an impressive entrance on a white horse—a pre-matinée idol. Again, Soldene had the reversion of the part, but in the succeeding production of *Little Faust* she was called upon actually to “create” the character of Margaret, much to her disgust, for she did not like her Faust, Tom Maclagan, the music-hall singer. Jennie Lee, who had been a pert page in *Chilperic*, was promoted to the condition of a crossing sweeper, in silken rags, brandishing a golden besom, and crying, “Copper! Yir’onor! Copper!” which became a London catch-phrase. Hollingshead, feeling his way toward a definite policy at the Gaiety—he certainly had no vision of “the sacred lamp” at the outset of his journey—tried *opéra bouffe*, notably Offenbach’s *The Princess of Trebizonde*, in which Toole played the Showman, and Nellie Farren his daughter—Chaumont’s original part. *La Belle Hélène*, *Geneviève de Brabant*, *Barbe Bleue* and many minor works of Offenbach were done at the Gaiety.

Throughout the seventies the Alhambra was the home of *opéra bouffe*—which also divagated to the Philharmonic, Islington, where Charles Morton, burned out of the Oxford Music Hall, had taken refuge with Charles Head, the book-maker, for his partner. The Alhambra had lost its music-hall licence, thanks in part to the habit of French and German patrons of the promenade punching each other’s noses, by way of echoing the war, and became a theatre, running *opéra bouffe*, with interpolated

ballet. Many French artists and musicians found their way to England at that time. Strange that after an interval of fifty years and another war Mr Charles B. Cochran should find a home for other artist-refugees, and with Delysia and Morton encourage a new growth in popularity of French music in London.

From 24th April 1871, when the Alhambra reopened as a theatre proper, for a year it ran a mixed programme of farce, operetta and ballet. Then, with Offenbach's *Le Roi Carotte* and a ballet by Jacobi, John Baum began a definite policy—shortly securing Kate Santley for his leading lady; anon, Julia Matthews, Constance Loseby, Lennox Grey, Pattie Laverne, Emily Soldene, Corneille D'Anka, Selina Dolaro, Clara Vesey, Emma Chambers, Alice May and Fannie Leslie. Among popular comedians here one recalls Harry Paulton, Jimmy Stoye, Charles Collette and Fred Leslie. Notable productions at the Alhambra during the seventies were *King Carotte*, *The Black Crook*, *The Pretty Perfumeress*, *The Grand Duchess*, *La Perichole*, *La Poule aux Œufs d'Or*, *Venise*, *The Princess of Trebizonde*, *La Fille du Tambour Major*, *Jeanne Jeanette et Jeanneton*, *The Merry War*, *King Comete*, *La Voyage à la Lune*, and *The Beggar Student*. To Baum William Bailey succeeded, to Bailey Charles Morton, and in October, 1884, the blessed privilege of a music-hall licence was restored.

Meanwhile, burned out of the Oxford Music Hall, Morton had been running the dilapidated Philharmonic Hall, Islington, familiarly known as the

“Dustbin.” His first experiments in comic opera were with excerpts, a then illegal item of a music-hall programme. But he went the whole hog with *Geneviève de Brabant* on 10th November 1871. It ran a year. All roads led to Islington, the Prince of Wales heading a stream of golden youth. Emily Soldene’s Drogan was the talk of the town, and every street boy was a-whistling her *Sleep Song*. No less popular was the *We’ll Run ’Em In* of the two gendarmes, Felix Bury and Edward Marshall.

At the Philharmonic, on 4th October 1873, *La Fille de Madame Angot* was first done in English, with a libretto by H. J. Byron, Julia Matthews as Lange, and Selina Dolaro as Clairette. It ran two hundred and thirty-five nights. Morton had quarrelled with Head, and left. In association with Hollingshead, a month later, he did another version, by Farnie, at the Gaiety, with Soldene as Lange, and Annie St Clair as Clairette. The arrangements of the Gaiety were not, in those days, for long runs, but a new home for *La Fille* was found at the Opera Comique, Pattie Laverne replacing Miss St Clair. A run of many months ensued. The disordered state of the copyright law allowed of half-a-dozen versions. Notable Langes were Corneille D’Anka, Lennox Grey, Dolaro and Kitty Munro. Notable Clairettes were Carrie Nelson, Constance Loseby, Kate Santley and Alice Burville. Between Soldene and Dolaro, who often appeared in the opera together, there was a genuine “quarrel” scene, as you will find from a perusal of Madame Emily’s vivacious volume.

Elsewhere *opéra bouffe* most firmly established itself with the production of *Les Cloches de Corneville* in 1878 at the Folly. Its long run was at its second home, the Globe. The Strand was devoted to *opéra bouffe*. Here Florence St John, who had succeeded to the character of Germaine in *Les Cloches de Corneville*, was entrusted with her first original character as Madame Favart and Violet Cameron was the Suzanne. Again the actresses were associated here in *Olivette*. Miss Cameron stayed for *Naval Cadets*, in which Dolaro made, I think, her last appearance. And then the Strand was devoted to other uses.

Meanwhile the Comedy Theatre was built, for the especial accommodation of *opéra bouffe*, in 1881, and a year later the Avenue. *La Mascotte*, previously tried at Brighton, was an immediate success at the Comedy—it set the seal on Violet Cameron's reputation, also employing Lionel Brough. In *Rip Van Winkle* Fred Leslie gave a memorable performance. In *Falka* W. S. Penley made his first remarkable success as lay Brother Pelican.

A revival of *Madame Favart* began the career of the Avenue. *Les Manteaux Noirs*, *Lurette*, *La Vie*—introducing Arthur Roberts, for whom the authorities had recommended a change of airs—*Nell Gwynn*, *Nadgy* and *The Old Guard* ensued ere George Alexander became the lessee of the Avenue and laid the foundation of a fortune, to be rudely but not disastrously shaken by a defaulting manager.

It is preposterous nonsense to say that the Gilbert

and Sullivan operas "sounded the death knell" of *opéra bouffe*. Not exactly, but nearly, contemporaneous are *Pinafore* with seven hundred performances and *Les Cloches de Corneville* with seven hundred and five; *Madame Favart* with five hundred and two and *The Pirates of Penzance* with three hundred and sixty-three performances; *Olivette* with four hundred and sixty-six and *Patience* with five hundred and seventy-eight; *Princess Ida* with two hundred and forty-six and *Falka* with one hundred and fifty-seven; *The Mikado* with six hundred and seventy-two and *Erminie* with one hundred and fifty-four; *Ruddigore* with two hundred and eighty-three and *The Old Guard* with three hundred; *The Yeoman of the Guard* with four hundred and twenty-three and *Pepita* with one hundred and two; *Nadgy* with one hundred and sixty-two. The Gilbert and Sullivan story ends with *The Gondoliers*' five hundred and fifty-four performances, while *La Cigale* was making four hundred and twenty-three.

No! The death knell of *opéra bouffe* was sounded, if ever, by the success of *In Town*, expanding to multiform musical comedies, in time superseded by the German and Austrian compositions which became an obsession of managers. In 1897, when Savoy Opera was a dead letter so far as London was concerned, *La Poupée* took the liberty of running up five hundred and seventy-six performances at the Prince of Wales's Theatre.

CHAPTER III

THE ROMANTIC STORY OF "LES CLOCHES DE CORNEVILLE"

Alias the Costumier—And Farnie the Librettist—Inane Opera Books
—A Thrilling First Night—Shiel Barry's Gaspard, and Others—
A Mummer's Wife—How £20,000 went astray

IT is one of the dear incongruities of London life that for many years the frippery of the stage has been composed in what was once a convent on the west side of Soho Square. Near by Madame du Barry lived—from M. Alias's windows you can look o'er the site of Madame Cornelys' reception-room, now occupied by a Catholic church. For nearly half-a-century Charles Alias had been costumier-in-chief to every important production of *opéra bouffe*; and his account books are an epitome of its history. He equipped *Les Cloches de Corneville* for a matter of three or four hundred pounds. It probably earned three or four hundred thousand. The manager of to-day who began such an adventure with less than ten thousand pounds at his back would be a madman.

At the time of the Franco-Prussian War young Charles Alias, the son of a village surgeon in Normandy, turned out of the paternal home because he refused to follow his father's profession, arrived in London, a forlorn stranger. He formed a friendship

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with Clodoche, the inventor of the *can-can*, then dancing at the Philharmonic Theatre, Islington, and was in due course attached to the wardrobe there.

A ramshackle place, the old Philharmonic was, none the less, a favourite resort of the Prince of Wales and his friends. There was a picnic scene in *Geneviève* and it was the custom of the aristocratic patrons of the house to supply champagne liberally. As a recognition of their generosity they were allowed to go on the stage and take a glass or two with the pretty ladies before the curtain went up. Morton, whom we know in later life as a sedate, stage-banker-looking person, with set opinions and no ideas, was quite willing to bow obsequiously to the idiosyncrasies of any aristocratic patron. But if the conviviality long continued he would rush backwards and forwards, exhorting the revellers to get their business over and let him "ring up"—the disposition of the audience being to resent the premature and occasionally prolonged sounds of revelry that reached them.

Soldene became more famous as *Carmen*, but her smart Drogan will always linger in the memory. Another member of the Philharmonic company was "Mons." Marius, the handsome young Frenchman who married Florence St John. His stage career in London was cut short by the call to arms. When he returned he was in sore straits, and a part was benevolently written into *Geneviève* for his accommodation.

When Morton and Head quarrelled, the book-maker ran the Philharmonic Theatre on his own account. In the course of time it became the Grand, the prototype of the suburban theatres.

M. Alias struck up a remarkable friendship with H. B. Farnie, who for many years was the autocrat of comic opera. "We must have looked a strange couple," says M. Alias, "I so small, he a monstrous creature. He always wore the smallest 'billy-cock' his head would carry, and an exceedingly short reefer-coat. An eccentric collar and tie completed his grotesque appearance—people used to turn round and stare at him as he walked along; and he always politely declared they were guying me! He believed himself a tremendous success with women, but that side of his character it is not edifying to discuss.

"Farnie's libretti were the butt of the critics, who were never weary of chaffing his inane rhymes and banal sentiment. But he was impervious. The fact is that Farnie did not depend for success on any literary skill, but on business acumen. He could in an instant judge of the possibilities of a French production here. We would go to Paris together, and at once close a deal. *Madame Favart* was at the outset a failure there, but coined money here. It established Florence St John in popular favour, and Herbert Tree made one of his first successes as the Marquis de Pontsable on tour. Once, I recall, Farnie scribbled a complete translation of a 'book' on our way home from Paris. It was of *Belle Lurette*, I think."

There is something to be said for him who adapts a Continental book. Basil Hood certainly had literary taste and skill. Not long before his death—in such tragical circumstances—he declared that he would never again undertake adaptation, though a fortune made out of *The Merry Widow* should have alleviated

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the agony. He claimed that the music should be written to the book, not the book to the music; and cited Sullivan, who roundly declared that "only a d——d fool" could think otherwise—with accommodations, of course. Further, Hood declared that French, but especially German, libretti were mostly decent, and devoid of humour. So the story had to be emasculated to idiocy, and the comic character developed, or indeed bodily introduced.

"*Les Cloches de Corneville*," M. Alias proceeded, "was our most memorable experience. Planquette was a writer of music-hall songs; and *Les Cloches* was not well received at the outset. But it was patiently worked into a success by its manager and ran hundreds of nights. In London, Farnie and his partner Henderson had quarrelled—they were always quarrelling. They wanted to get through with the production and with their responsibility as quickly as they could, at the smallest possible cost, and declared, when they saw my bills for something in the neighbourhood of four hundred pounds, that I should never work for them again. They cast the play in the most casual fashion; and were agreed that Shiel Barry selected for Gaspard could only help to ruin the show. He was a fairly well-known actor, too, of Irish 'character' parts, in Boucicault's dramas. He caught cold on the eve of the production and, trying a dozen remedies, got his throat into a shocking state. His hoarseness accounted for half his success! The original Germaine was Violet Cameron, who died lately—and so, all the principals are gone. She was replaced, after a time, by Florence St John, already

familiar with the part in the provinces. Kate Munro was the Serpolette, John Howson the Marquis—he afterwards elected to play Gaspard on tour—W. J. Hill the Bailie, Charles Ashford the Gobo, and M. Loredan the Grenicheux.

“Henderson and Farnie had left the theatre when the last roar of applause went up, and assured each other that the noise they heard was the audience ‘guying’ the production. Shiel Barry awoke next morning to find himself famous—the opera ran for years—somewhere it is running still. But the strange thing is that owing to some copyright bungle my life-long friend Planquette never drew a penny fee. He used to reckon his loss on that account at £20,000.”

Sometimes the reminiscent will count Gaspards. For myself, I recall Shiel Barry, John Howson, E. J. Odell, who used to do Ophelia business with straw in his hair, T. D. York, Younge, Joe Eldred, James Fernandez, and the Gaiety veteran, E. W. Royce.

No story of *Les Cloches de Corneville* would be complete that did not recall *The Mummer’s Wife*. George Moore has an amazing capacity for “swotting” a subject he does not understand, and from “Jimmie” Glover cleverly extracted the episodes and characters for his once shocking story of theatrical life on tour. Most of us can identify the caricatures. But a city newspaper went too far when it penetrated to Glover himself—as the conductor who stole sandwiches from a railway bar. Glover began a libel action—won it, indeed—but still whistles for the damages, when he is disposed for music.

CHAPTER IV

THE REAL FLORENCE ST JOHN

An Ideal Nell Gwynn—Early Music-hall Experiences—Madame Favart's Salary—Maggie Greig with the Four Husbands

AT times Florence St John was possessed by the spirit of mischief, and an ingenuous reporter was to her the "worstest devil of all" in the way of temptation. She would draw upon an active and inexhaustible imagination for the wildest stories, and if one struck her as particularly good she would repeat it until she almost believed it herself.

There is, I suppose, no more vivid, fascinating, probably faithful picture of Nell Gwynn than that drawn by Anthony Hope in *Simon Dale*. There she is, the genius of the stage, of a great heart and folly immeasurable, frail, beautiful, benevolent—in all her aspects adorable. When *Simon Dale* was adapted to the stage as *English Nell* Florence St John, become a jolly *comédienne* in later life, played Nell; and Anthony Hope penned her an enthusiastic letter of assurance that she had fulfilled his ideal. No doubt he spoke the truth. It seemed as though the stormy seasons of the actress had spent in a St Martin's summer of peacefulness and new celebrity, and then she died.

That Florence St John ever sang in the streets of



FLORENCE ST. JOHN
ABOUT 1890

London is untrue. But she did, as Florence Leslie, sing operatic songs at the Oxford Music Hall, her reward being four pounds a week. A companion in the company, as Hubert Maurice—singing, for instance, a ballad called *Never again thy Face to see*, which a manager unkindly whistled as he paid the artist—was the omnipotent agent of later days, Hugh Jay Didcott, too poor to complete his evening dress with white kid gloves, so Florence, as she left the stage, would lend him hers to carry. Such impulsive tricks of kindness filled her life. Once a pitiful correspondent, casually selected from the large contingent that addressed her daily, was invited to her flat, and told a moving story of an indifferent husband. “Jack” listened to her tale, and then broke in: “You’re a pretty thing; but too dowdy to engage any man’s affections. I’m going to fix your hair—so, and so.” A careful toilet was completed by the gift of a new hat snatched from a wardrobe. And the rest of the tale shall not be told, for it reacted badly on the impulsive actress—to the infinite amusement of her friends.

“Jack” was the pet name of Bohemian London, but Margaret Greig—Maggie for short—was the real girl, the idol and despair of her Devonshire family, of Scotch extraction. She offended her music-master; and so her father, an accomplished amateur, gave her himself such tuition as she had. But it is recalled that whenever he summoned her to serious work Maggie professed a passion for house-cleaning. Indeed she never repressed this love of domesticity. Once when she had devoted much time and trouble

to the composition of a Lancashire hot-pot, Phil May being the guest of honour at this luncheon-party, she was reduced to naught by a round-robin next day: "The hot-pot was rotten!" One of the participants reminded me the other day that this verdict was unanimous—and just.

One day, driving through Oxford Street in her carriage and pair, St John saw two urchins toiling beneath a basket of laundry. She picked them up, delivered their washing and took them home to tea—committed them to the care of her cook and, forgetting their existence, set off some hours later for the theatre. Finally the carriage was again summoned to take the happy little rascals home; and the coachman rounded off the day by giving notice.

At fifteen Maggie Greig ran away from home to marry a youngster in the navy, and became Mrs Harford St John. The young people were both discarded by their families, and played hide-and-seek with starvation. The boy sickened of consumption and died. His young wife had supported him by singing, in the most humble circumstances, till friends took pity and forgave. But the light-hearted girl was soon herself again. At a concert got up to supply a poor Catholic priest with an organ she met an opera singer, Lithgow James, married him, and took to the profession of the stage. The Greigs were Scottish Presbyterians, but had Catholic connections, and the Exeter clergy were constant visitors at their cottage home. Many years later Florence St John, espying Bishop Brindle, ran across Oxford Street and, with a curtsy, cried: "Sure, you've

forgotten me, Father!" With a mischievous gleam in his eye the old man said: "Well, it might be Maggie Greig with the four husbands." Such had meantime been her liberal allowance.

During several seasons Florence St John toured the provinces with one itinerant opera company and another—those directed by Durand, Blanche Cole and Rose Hersee. She acquired a repertory of ample proportions—she sang, as one well-known *maestro* called upon to pronounce upon her talent said, "as a bird sings, needing nothing from me." St John was not the first Germaine in *Les Cloches de Corneville*. But I believe she was the first provincial Germaine, and I think the company was under the direction of my old friend, Charles Bernard. At any rate she was so successful that she was brought to town to the Folly Theatre at Easter, 1878.

St John's first original part was that of Madame Favart—just a year after her debut at the Strand. Her salary was then seven pounds a week, and her frugal husband insisted that one shilling and sixpence was a sufficient daily expenditure on lunch. The revolt of the high-spirited girl, eager to enjoy to the full the new London life of Bohemia—she drank its cup to the dregs—her meeting with Marius, and all that followed can but be suggested here.

In spite of her disastrous quarrel with Marius, he was her obsession to the end; and friends looked forward confidently to their remarriage. Probably George Edwardes, who hated all unpleasant things, was never confronted with a task so unpleasant as that of breaking the news of Marius's death.

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A near relative of St John, talking of her the other day, burst into sudden laughter as a picture came before her eyes. Entering the drawing-room unannounced, she found "Jack" in one arm-chair, a stage notability, looking terribly self-conscious, in another, both with their pedal extremities, as the reporters say, immersed in foot-baths. St John, proud of a recently discovered cure for troubled feet, had insisted on its instant application, and took a bath herself, so that her perplexed visitor should not feel singular.

She was the greatest singer and actress of my time in *opéra bouffe*, so sweet in her own personality that her keenest rival would not seriously contest her supremacy, daring in her mischievousness and humour, yet so spontaneous and so natural that the complete prude was completely paralysed; prodigal in her generosity—and so ingenuous in her inquiry as to the meaning of "R.D." on a cheque that a West End bank manager's belief in guilelessness was suddenly restored.

CHAPTER V

THE AVENUE THEATRE AND ARTHUR ROBERTS

Statistics of London Theatres—St John revives *La Mascotte*—Lord Alfred Paget, Fish Merchant—The Coming of Arthur Roberts

SEFTON PARRY, a considerable speculator in the theatre as real estate in the seventies and eighties, built the Avenue. He was suspected of a shrewd belief that it would immediately be absorbed in an abortive improvement scheme. So there was a grim humour in the situation when Charing Cross Station flung itself upon the renamed Playhouse and nearly crushed it. The mountain came to Mahomet with a vengeance! Parry published an apology for building the Avenue which is curious reading to-day. He contrasted a list of the London theatres in 1852, and a very slightly increased list of the London theatres in 1882—many of the names in each list would be unknown to the modern reader—in proof that there was room for the Avenue. To-day no man could do better with a million than build ten theatres!

Florence St John and Marius were Parry's first tenants; Morton their manager. They opened with *Favart*; and in their company was Fred Leslie, not long before Fred Hobson, plying a quill in the city; Henry Ashley too, who had suddenly changed

from a heavy man into an unctuous comedian ; and the much-photographed Maud Branscombe. *Les Manteaux Noirs*, *La Belle Lurette* and a revival of *Barbe Bleue* ensued. Then in the autumn of 1883 appeared on the scene Henderson and Farnie, with that dyed old demi-rep, Lord Alfred Paget, for their persistent patron. Lord Alfred Paget was an enthusiastic yachtsman, with a passion for deep-sea fishing, and from time to time, when he was away on such expeditions, a reminder of him would arrive at the theatre in the shape of a few hundred-weight of fish, which it was Charles Alias's invidious task to divide among the company, quality according to importance.

But the most important event in the history of the Avenue as a home of *opéra bouffe* was the arrival of Arthur Roberts, in the August of 1883, as Joe Tarradiddle, in Offenbach's *La Vie*. Someone challenged Arthur Roberts the other day with the remark : " You can't be nearly seventy." Roberts agreed heartily : " No ! I *can't* ! " For he is an eager competitor for public favour still—after upwards of half-a-century. His career touches what we call " the lighter side " of the stage at every point of its development—as to morals and as to manners. For himself, he is probably the most characteristic artist of his time.

My first encounter with him was at Manchester thirty years ago. He appeared at one of Garcia's two music halls, the Gaiety and the Folly, or at both. Garcia was the typical manager of the day, a Spanish Jew of curious antecedents, who frankly

regarded a music hall as a place where people of a certain kind expected to find entertainment of a certain kind. The decoration of his ramshackle houses was tawdry, their atmosphere laden with drink and smoke and vile scent. Women marched the promenade incessantly. Arthur Roberts sang :

“Oh, stand me a cab fare, duckie,
Oh, call me a hansom, dear.
Pray buy me a hot potato,
I feel so awfully queer !
Your eyes are so dreadfully wicked—
No ! Kissing I couldn't allow ;
I might have done so three months ago,
But I'm living with mother now.”

With bated breath they told you that the singer got eighty pounds a week—a tremendous salary in those days. He would in equal circumstances command five times that figure now.

Roberts had previously become famous as the singer, at the Oxford Music Hall, of a song with the refrain, “If I were only long enough a soldier I would be,” innocent enough. But the manager of the eighties demanded what he called “spice” in his ditties. Roberts gave way, with results which shall be explained. I have seen it variously stated that the artist was in early life clerk to a lawyer, a money-lender and a banker. The explanation is that three such single gentlemen were often rolled into one. Alternatively he sang at “penny readings,” and was a candidate for the chairmanship of an old London music hall, Deacons', long swept away by Rosebery Avenue. Another comedian, destined to

become famous too, got the job, and Roberts went on comic singing, with such joyous irresponsibility that the licensing authorities, with a premature inflation of moral sentiment, suggested a term of sequestration from the variety stage, and the artist betook himself to the "regular" stage. The remonstrance of the licensing authorities seemed to have set free a genius. Roberts applied himself to *opéra bouffe*, which was showing signs of decay. But the actor made it the vogue again. His first conspicuous success was in *The Old Guard*. It was followed by many, during a term of years.

He had a rare knack of comic "make-up," a clear staccato style of singing, a most expressive eye and an incomparable eloquence of pantomime—without a word of introduction or explanation he would suggest, for instance, that a woman looking in her mirror noticed a little untidiness of coiffure. Minutely he would dissect and elaborately reconstruct the panoply of fashion. With such antics the actor would engage his audience for the space of minutes—a marvel of observation, of mischievousness, of supersimian mimicry. But greatest gift of all was that of verbal improvisation. Farnie would refrain from writing at intervals, merely enjoining Roberts to keep the show going for thirty minutes or so. Easily he did so! Such resource of humour, such readiness of repartee, such charming insolence. On to the Gaiety, where Mr George Edwardes found him invaluable. And then to fresh woods. Musical comedy owes more to Arthur Roberts even than variety, or *opéra bouffe*, or burlesque did. His

Captain Coddington, in *In Town*, turned the head of London youth, which copied his coats, his cravats, his hats. You can, I believe, still buy the Coddington hat.

Also, it loved to read of his escapades, and emulate them too; for no appreciation of Arthur Roberts would be complete that did not touch upon the smart man about town, the dapper and skilful coachman, the inveterate practical joker. A club was dedicated to the antics of the incorrigible *farceur*.

Again Roberts assisted in the development of musical comedy, with *Gentleman Joe*, which differed from all its predecessors and established, as a writer of infinite charm and technical care, Basil Hood, a young army captain. A divagation to the variety stage, to gratify George Edwardes, is memorable. Coloured reproductions of Jan Van Beers were the vogue, as in the later instance of Kirchner. Roberts made up as the *viveur* of the scarlet dress-coat, came to the Empire in its old brave days and sang effectively enough. To me the interest of the event was its glorious apotheosis of my Manchester *comique*.

CHAPTER VI

“JACK SHEPPARD”

Nellie Farren in Drama and Burlesque—The Real Jack Sheppard—
Predatory Playwrights—Jonathan Wild takes the Receipts—Mrs
Keeley's Jack—John Hollingshead's Legacy

WHEN Weedon Grossmith died few of his biographers remarked that he was the last of a long line of Jack Sheppards. He appeared in a new version of the play, by Joseph Hatton, produced with a careful regard for historical detail, in costume and environment, and professing to have gone back to original authorities, at the Pavilion Theatre, Mile End, on 9th April 1898, sixty years almost exactly after the first performance there of the first of many plays filched from Ainsworth's novel. Hatton believed that he could claim superiority to catch-penny criminology. Grossmith, who was a bit of a virtuoso, believed he was the ideal representative of the “immortal” house-breaker. But there *réclame* was in vain. The scant notice of the play and its short run were a bitter disappointment.

Not long ago I took tea with one of the earlier Jack Sheppards—a dear, white-haired old lady, in black silk and rare lace, who told me how she had begun her stage career ere she was ten, as Hamlet and as Richard—who narrowly escaped sailing with G. V. Brooke on the ill-fated *London*, and who



SCENE FROM "JACK SHEPPARD" (CRUICKSHANK)
ADELPHI THEATRE, 1839
MRS. KEELEY, PAUL BEDFORD

succeeded to the rôle of Jack Sheppard when she succeeded Nellie Farren as the soubrette at the Victoria, alternatively in affectionate description "Queen Victoria's own Theayter" and "The Bleeding Vic." Dear Mrs Frederick Wright! Mother of the stage she loved, and adorned by her virtues as greatly as by her art, throughout a long life, so soon to come to a tragical and still mysterious end. Nellie Farren, you see, played Jack *au sérieux* many years before her success as the dapper little rascal of a Gaiety burlesque.

When Harrison Ainsworth, the young lawyer from Manchester, came to town to rival Dickens in popularity as a novelist, and in society as a curled and gilded dandy, he wrote *Jack Sheppard* frankly for the money it seemed likely—according to the precedent of *Rookwood*, his Dick Turpin story—to bring in. When the storm of reprobation thundered—the novel, in fact, excluded him from the Athenæum—he faced it with the protest that in fact he had meant to point a moral, and had adorned his tale for the public good. It remains one of the best sellers. And I own I am a grateful lover of Ainsworth. How many a youth has he beckoned, with fascinating finger, to the serious study of history!

"Ainsworth," said one of his friends, "was certainly a handsome man—but it was very much the barber's block kind of beauty; with wavy, scented hair, smiling lips, and pink and white complexion. As a young man he was gorgeous in the *outré* dress of the dandy of thirty-six, and in common with those other famous dandies, d'Orsay, young Benjamin

Disraeli and Tom Duncombe, wore multitudinous waistcoats, over which dangled a long chain, numberless rings, and a black satin stock. In old age he was very patriarchal-looking. Up to the day of his death he was always a well-dressed man, but in a far more sober fashion than in his youth.”

I am afraid the real Jack was a sordid little scoundrel, ungrateful to a kind employer, drunken, dissolute, incorrigibly dishonest; but the incarnate mockery of locks, bolts and bars; in death an abject coward. He was executed at Tyburn on 16th November 1724. A month later he was the central figure in a harlequinade at Drury Lane.

Ainsworth's novel began serial publication in *Bentley's Miscellany* in January, 1839. But a few issues had appeared when the first Pavilion play was produced. In those days every outlying theatre had its house author, a poor devil who, for a few pounds a week, was called upon to dodge up perhaps an equal number of plays, some of which, still handed down from barnstormer to barnstormer, never got beyond manuscript. When old Bennett, the wealthy booth-theatre proprietor, died, he left thousands of such plays.

Dickens, who fretted and fumed under the raids of the predatory playwrights, shared the first place with Ainsworth in their regard. Of course not a penny was payable in royalties. But Ainsworth, more philosophical than his friend—there was a rift in their friendship, by the way, when *Jack* ran ahead of *Oliver* awhile in the bookselling business—got a fee out of *Jack Sheppard*. When he heard that



WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH
1805-1882

poor, blind Moncrieff, who dramatised *Tom and Jerry*, and who nowadays would probably be making thousands a year, was dramatising *Jack Sheppard*, he called on the old man and good-naturedly communicated the plan of the last few still unpublished chapters. This play, one of eight done during the year—not forgetting Richardson’s show, with the inevitable ghost of Mrs Sheppard appearing to her offspring in his cell—was done at the Surrey Theatre, with “Handsome John” Neville, father of Henry Neville, as Jonathan Wild. Whether spontaneously or by arrangement, Ainsworth approved this version of his novel in a letter of the best soap, hair-dye, or tooth-paste testimonial style, and the manager sent him a cheque for twenty pounds!

I came across the curious case of a Jack Sheppard, a Miss Vyvian, who had to tearfully apologise to her audience that she was in such a state of nerves she could not proceed with the play. The Jonathan Wild, who was also the treasurer, had decamped with the night’s receipts—a proceeding worthy of the real Jonathan, who was probably the most crafty and cruel wretch in the history of crime. He trained thieves and skilfully directed their work. He kept a huge warehouse, with a staff of clerks, a counting-house and an intelligence department. He would take fees from persons who had been robbed to inquire into their cases, and sometimes, for a further payment, restore property he pretended to have recovered. The residue he dealt with in the way of commerce. The authorities allowed him to assume

official rank, by virtue of which he was able to denounce any wretch who revolted against his rule—he hanged them by the hundred. He swaggered about town, and was a tremendous success with women. When he was hanged himself, his shrieks were o’ercrowed by the execrations of the mob.

Buckstone’s version of *Jack Sheppard*, done at the Adelphi in October, 1839, was the most remarkable of all. In this Mrs Keeley, queening it so recently as the supreme veteran of the stage—she was ninety-three when she died in 1899—played Jack for fifteen pounds a week. She loved to talk of it to the end of her days, declaring that it was the most exacting part she ever played. Dickens loved her as Smike, and Sergeant Ballantyne, an ardent lover of the theatre, thought her wonderful in both characters. She went to Newgate for atmosphere; and got the Adelphi stage carpenter to teach her how to plane real chips from real wood. It was their delight to keep sharpening her chisel, for the carving of her name on the beam, as she sang :

“ When Claude Duval was in Newgate thrown,
He carved his name on the dungeon stone.
Quoth a dubsman who gazed on the shattered wall,
‘ You’ve carved your epitaph, Claude Duval,
With your chisel so fine, tra la.’ ”

From Ainsworth’s *Rookwood* was annexed *Nix my Dolly Pals*, sung as a duet by Mrs Keeley and Paul Bedford, the Blueskin. Mrs Nailer, the Moll Maggott, and Miss Campbell, the Edgworth Bess, joined in an ensuing dance.

“ *Nix my Dolly Pals*,” writes Sir Theodore Martin,

“travelled everywhere, and made the patter of thieves and burglars familiar in our mouths as household words. It deafened us in the streets, where it was as popular with the organ-grinders and German bands as Sullivan’s brightest melodies ever were in a later day. It clanged at midday from the steeple of St Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh—a fact; that such a subject for cathedral chimes, and in Scotland too, could ever have been chosen will scarcely be believed. But my astonished ears often heard it. It was whistled by every dirty guttersnipe and chanted in drawing-rooms by fair lips, little knowing the meaning of the words they sang.”

Blueskin’s song, *Jolly Nose*, was a free adaptation of a French ballad *Beau Nez*, to be found in Olivier Basselin’s *Vaux de Vise*.

Jack Sheppard was again and again revived at the Haymarket in 1852, with Mrs Keeley as Jack and O. Smith as Jonathan Wild. At Sadler’s Wells in 1855 Mrs Honner played Jack in the first and second acts, her husband did so in the third and fourth. At the Surrey in 1858 Paul Bedford resumed his old character of Blueskin, “supporting” Mrs Billington.

Then it suddenly occurred to the Lord Chamberlain that *Jack Sheppard* was a most immoral play. Came in 1859 his belated ban—though he permitted an odd performance, drastically edited, as noted in an apology on the programme, at the Adelphi in 1873. For years Jack was a theatrical outlaw. But he crept back. In the early days Ainsworth’s novel had been adapted by two French playwrights as *Les*

Chevaliers du Brouillard. What more simple than Mr Frederick Boyle to readapt this, as *Old London*, in which Miss Henrietta Hodson, who became Mrs Henry Labouchere, figured as Jack Wastrell!

And here my story jumps to the Gaiety in 1885. *Jack Sheppard*, in the form of a burlesque, was Hollingshead's last personal contribution to the Gaiety. Before its production, on 26th December of that year, after a then unusual trial trip to the provinces, he had entered into partnership with George Edwardes. They soon quarrelled, and in 1886 separated. Hollingshead's last identification with the theatre was at a banquet of welcome to Henry Dixey, who brought over a popular American burlesque, *Adonis*, which did not prove so popular here, and which moved Irving to mischievous anger by an insolent caricature of him. He got it suppressed by authority, and cut Dixey.

Meanwhile the Gaiety quartet had gone to pieces, Nellie Farren being its notable remnant.

What a Jack she made—none the worse for her dramatic experience of the part. *Little Jack Sheppard* registered one hundred and fifty-five performances. It was written by two clever, hopeless Bohemians who never did any particular good for themselves—"Cricketer Bill" Yardley, the first to score a hundred in a university match, a failure at the Bar, a desultory journalist, a dramatist of some skill, a great, lovable, indolent fellow; and "Pot" Stephens, who was esteemed on *The Telegraph* because he could write about social functions like a gentleman, and did not get tangled among the titles. His claim to fame was

that he wrote the book of an all-English comic opera, for which the much-married "Teddie" Solomon provided the music, *Billee Taylor*.

Little Jack Sheppard was finely cast. David James returned to his old love to play Blueskin and sing *Botany Bay*. Odell, who left the stage so long ago to become the Ancient Mariner of the Strand, was the Sir Roland, dear old Harriett Coveney was the Mrs Wood, handsome Marion Hood (*née* Isaacs) was the Winifred, Tillie Wadman, from the Avenue, the Thames Darrell, Sylvia Grey the Polly Stanmore, and the Jonathan Wild Fred Leslie, a young city clerk, Hobson by name, who had already made a hit as Rip Van Winkle, but who certainly found his *métier* in Gaiety burlesque, and followed it successfully till his premature death in 1892. He was but thirty-seven.

When, in 1894, *Little Jack Sheppard* was revived at the Gaiety, Seymour Hicks made his first appearance there as Jonathan Wild.

I suppose that Jack is dead and buried now. Which reminds me that his sepulchre was not in the church of St Martin's-in-the-Fields, as the guide-books say, but in the graveyard of the neighbouring workhouse, where his remains were found when the coffins were removed for the extension of the National Gallery in 1866. Ainsworth for domestic effect buried him in the village cemetery, where a smug sexton used to sell chips purporting to be taken from the cross on his grave.

CHAPTER VII

THE GAIETY QUARTET

"We are a merry family! We are! We are!! We are!!!"—The Sole Survivor—Edward Royce, eighty not out!—The Early Gaiety—A Story of H. J. Byron—The Beginning of the Quartet—and its End

BEFORE me stands a picture of the famous Gaiety quartet. It is inscribed: "We are a merry family! We are! We are!! We are!!!" and it is autographed: "Edward Terry, Edward Royce, Nellie Farren, Kate Vaughan." Three of them are doing their *danse macabre* in the shades. But the fourth, "Teddie" Royce, not long since gave me a friendly call on his return to town after three months' arduous work in the provinces as Gaspard in *Les Cloches de Corneville*, and professed the utmost eagerness to get to work again. A few seasons ago he delighted old friends and new with a "creation" in a Drury Lane drama as fine in its cameo clearness as the most distinguished in the play—Old Alf the "fence" in *Flying Colours*.

When Royce reminded me that it was upwards of forty years since he joined the Gaiety company, promoted from one of its touring organisations, I rubbed my eyes and gazed upon the cheery, indefatigable old man in wonder. Moreover, he was already an experienced actor when he attracted the



THE GAIETY QUARTETTE

LEFT TO RIGHT: NEILLIE FARREN, EDWARD TERRY, KATE VAUGHAN
AND EDWARD ROYCE

notice of the alert John Hollingshead. He had toured the provinces with John Coleman, maker of sonorous sentences; and with Captain Disney Roebuck, the military amateur actor who opened up South Africa as a field, eventually enormous, for theatrical enterprise. He was with that delightful creature Marie Litton at the St James's.

But Royce was not the doyen of the quartet. That distinction belonged to Nellie Farren, who had been trained in the rough school of the Victoria—not under Cave, as one constantly reads, but under his predecessors, Frampton and Fenton. She made her first appearance, on 28th March 1864, as Ninetta in a drama entitled *The Woman in Red*. But in a few months she moved on to the Olympic, under Horace Wigan. That is her true Alma Mater; and thence Hollingshead persuaded her. Kate Vaughan, too, was already at the Gaiety, but in quite an unimportant position. Terry was the last-comer of the four, seduced from the Swanboroughs at the Strand. The fact is that Hollingshead had at the outset no idea of lighting a sacred lamp to burlesque, or to anything else, at the Gaiety, which he regarded simply as a theatrical shop where he was prepared to offer any ware for which there should be a demand. He composed triple bills of farce, comedy, little dramas and burlesques that played barely an hour. The famous quartet was first exploited as such in the autumn of 1876 in Byron's *Little Don Cæsar de Bazan*, a burlesque in the main of *Maritana*. The quartet endured some seven years, and was probably at its best in Byron's burlesque of *The Forty Thieves*.

Mr Royce saw much of that charming, casual, imperturbable author, who detested the labour of rehearsal and was always absent when he was wanted. The indefatigable autocrat of the Gaiety was its musical director, Meyer Lutz. While rehearsals of *Don Cæsar* were in progress an important situation baffled everybody. Royce sought Byron in the Wellington bar—and found him. Writing as he talked, the dramatist said: “End your dance by disappearing through a ‘vampire,’ return through a ‘star’ trap—don’t tell me you can’t do it for I saw you in a Dublin pantomime—and say these lines :

“I’ve cut sly passages and secret doors,
Panels that slide, and traps let in the floors,
So that my movements are eccentric—very:
One moment deep below myself I bury,
But ere you say I’m there with words emphatic
I’m that erratic
I’m in that there attic.”

Hollingshead was the first manager of his importance who appreciated the music hall as a recruiting ground for talent, and in time found that his visits to the variety theatres were unwelcome to their proprietors. He stole any artist that he fancied—Constance Loseby, who had been a popular turn as a factor of Constance and Losebini (mother and daughter); Little Jack Dallas, who ran the gamut in his time from the “waxies” or street minstrels through the circus to Shakespeare; Rose Fox, a wonderful dancer whom he found in a Shoreditch gaff and who became the mother of the meteoric Maudie Darrell; Phyllis Broughton, an *élève* of the Canterbury ballet; Connie

Gilchrist, a present peeress but of the most humble birth; the notorious "Lardie" Wilson, D'Auban and Warde; Kate Vaughan, a Grecian Saloon and Cremorne Gardens favourite, in a black dance, and Jennie Hill, who failed egregiously when he tried to transplant her from her native heath.

Also, he seized any useful material—the comic songs of the day decorated many a Gaiety burlesque, and Zazel's aerial flight was cleverly caricatured. In old age Hollingshead became the chairman of a series of music halls, but his admiration for the genius of variety was tempered by a clear sight of its vulgarity and his criticisms of its manners and methods were enjoyably characteristic.

Almost certainly the quartet was not a creature of Hollingshead's imagination. It accumulated accidentally, just as the first three-decker burlesque was a concession to what he conceived to be the popular demand of the moment. In fact this form of entertainment was short-lived and eventually "scrapped" by George Edwardes in favour of musical comedy. Half the people who babble about the old burlesques would be bored stiff if they were invited to sit one through. Much of their old-time success was due to the fact that they were seriously interpreted by trained actors. That is how Gilbert got the complete effect of his old humour.

I do not suppose that Hollingshead ever contemplated the establishment of a school of burlesque. The Gaiety was a commercial enterprise undertaken by a man with rather more taste and catholicity than other managers of his day had. He was opinionated,

wrong-headed, ruggedly honest. Royce agreed with many whom I have met that you were only liable to regret a contract with Hollingshead when you accepted his scornful offer of "a bit of paper if you like." His word was best, and on that Royce travelled steadily from fourteen pounds a week to forty.

Burlesque forms numerically a very small portion of the Gaiety record, swollen by intercalary seasons of Shakespeare, by many French productions, by innumerable eccentric *matinées*. Probably no stock season or repertory season could compare with Hollingshead's quarter of a century here.

Terry, frugal and cautious, saw the crumbling of Hollingshead's power: the old man cherished this as a grievance to the end of his day—not very bitterly, for that was not his disposition. Terry had always had the privilege of leaving the Gaiety at certain seasons and touring its attractions for his own benefit. He strengthened his association with a promising young dramatist of that day, Arthur Pinero, and went his way through the Olympic with *The Rocket* and *In Chancery*, to Terry's Theatre with *Sweet Lavender* and *The Times*.

Royce broke down badly in health. He owns that the social life of the Gaiety was strenuous, too. During twelve months half his salary was regularly remitted to him—the fact that he was able eventually to repay the money does not diminish his appreciation of the generous character of his old chief. Years of Australian life were needed to restore the invalid—sped on his way by a benefit of proud dimensions,

for your true client of the Gaiety is of an unequalled loyalty. Kate Vaughan had aspirations to high comedy—and indeed they were fulfilled. So the quartet dissolved, leaving to the Gaiety but the priceless remnant of Nellie Farren.

CHAPTER VIII

“DOROTHY”

A Failure at first—Its Curious Origin—Saved by a Song—A Bargain Sale, and a Fortune—Arthur Williams—The Downfall of Jack Leslie

FULFILLING a concert engagement lately, Mr Charles Hayden Coffin was insistently called upon to sing *Queen of my Heart*. This is a constant experience. It seems the song will never die, although it came into existence almost by accident. During the phenomenally successful career of *Dorothy* Mr Coffin sang *Queen of my Heart* very few short of a thousand times—indeed to the best of his recollection he was never absent from a single performance.

Dorothy was produced at the Gaiety on 25th September 1886. It was apparently a failure! *Queen of my Heart* does not figure in the original score, but the outstanding success was the performance of the then little-known baritone, and the critics clamoured for more work to be allotted to him.

Alfred Cellier, the composer of the opera, was in Australia. His brother and legal representative, Frank Cellier, strenuously refused to allow the work of any other composer to be introduced. In these circumstances an expeditionary party set off to Chappell's, the music publishing house, and ransacked

the shelves for some earlier suitable work of Cellier's. *Queen of my Heart* was found hidden away as *Dreams*, a long-forgotten favourite in the entertainments of the "Mohawk Minstrels." B. C. Stephenson, the author of *Dorothy*, laid the printed copy on the top of the piano and quickly, in red ink, rewrote the ballad which we all know so well. It was not introduced until a fortnight after the production, but it was an instant success, and probably achieved the largest sale ever known of a drawing-room ballad.

In the meantime George Edwardes, thoroughly disgusted with *Dorothy*, made, what he thought, a fine deal with H. J. Leslie, a city accountant; he sold the production, lock, stock and barrel, for £1000. Leslie moved on to the Prince of Wales's Theatre, and is understood to have made a fortune approximating £100,000. The opera had already had a strange eventful history. Cellier, a fine musician, was for a long time located in Manchester, where many of his earlier compositions were produced. The score of *Dorothy* is mainly that of a play called *Old London*, for which H. B. Farnie provided the book. It was not a success. Farnie took his book elsewhere, and with the collaboration of Planquette produced *Nell Gwynn*, which proved just as popular as its predecessor had proved unpopular. Cellier met B. C. Stephenson, who had a libretto drawn from other sources, but owing a very great deal to a very old English comedy, *The Squire's Daughter*. So *Dorothy* came into existence. Stephenson was a brilliant and erratic creature, one of the best-known

men about town in his day, tall, handsome, well groomed, of a whimsical character and many adventures. He had been in the Diplomatic service, the manager of a Continental railway and of a bank ; but he was an incorrigible Bohemian and London life attracted him most. I think one of his last dramatic works was a reconstruction of an old Vokes farce, as *On the March*, for Cissie Graham. I remember a cheery party of us travelled to Sheffield for its production. Stephenson, whose attendance was quite indispensable, mischievously proposed to me that we should leave the theatre and catch the mail train back to London, leaving everybody wondering as to what had become of us ! He was, with Clement Scott, one of the adapters of Sardou's *Dora* as *Diplomacy*. I suppose that during his career he turned out not fewer than a hundred dramatic works of all kinds—operas, melodramas, farces, comedies. He had a curious facility for transforming flats and chambers into artistic and characteristic abodes of which he usually disposed with ease.

In the original cast of *Dorothy* were Marion Hood, who played the part of the heroine ; Florence Dysart the Lydia Hawthorne ; Florence Lambert the Phyllis Tuppett ; Mrs Harriet Coveney, a wonderful old comedy actress from the East End, the Mrs Privett ; Miss Florence Beare the Lady Betty ; Mr Redfern Hollins the Geoffrey Wilder ; Mr Coffin the Harry Sherwood ; Mr Furneau Cook the Squire Bantam ; Mr Ernest Griffen the John Tuppett ; Arthur Williams the Lurcher ; and Mr John le Hay the Tom Strut.

There are absent several names that will at once occur to the casually reminiscent, for in the course of time Redfern Hollins was succeeded by Ben Davies, now a most distinguished tenor in oratorio—but Mr Davies played his part in *Dorothy* hundreds and hundreds of times. And then there was Marie Tempest—only a few years previously she was, as Marie Ethrington, a prize pupil at the Royal Academy, hoping for a career on the concert platform. Probably she became the most famous prima donna of the operatic stage, in succession to St John. With rare tact and perennial youth she quietly retired, to become one of our most fascinating comedy actresses. Indeed with the notable exception of Mr Coffin the cast was changed and changed and changed !

There was, for instance, beautiful Grace Huntley, one of the most shapely and attractive principal boys, who for some reason accepted a very small part in *Dorothy*, but during its run played every female character. And again there was a promising young actress, Miss Carr Shaw, who is a sister of the humorist and playwright of to-day ; and there was Jennie McNully, a beautiful American girl, of no remarkable talent, who had a brief meteoric career on the London stage.

Arthur Williams, that rich and rare comedian, had known every vicissitude of the life of the actor. He was a pupil of the curious little theatre at King's Cross, now, I believe, a Methodist conventicle. Here the ambitious youth of the day paid, with as few shillings as he could, for the privilege of acting on

Saturday nights. It was 2s. 6d. for Rosencrantz, 5s. for Horatio, £1 for Hamlet, and so on. Williams strutted and starved for many years, until he became one of the most popular comedians in London. He was deeply versed in dramatic literature, and could recite long speeches from our finest comedies, but Fate decreed, to his deep resentment, that he should play in pantomime and burlesque, although play-goers who remember his Tramp in the *Message from Mars* know what charm and pathos he really had. Withal he was an impudent improvisatore. The part of Lurcher in *Dorothy* originally contained but few lines, but night after night Williams mischievously added a little, until it grew to quite an extraordinary length. But he fought for his end, and neither author nor high-souled musician could stop him when he got well going. Stephenson especially resented the modern touch which Williams gave to his lines. “Instalment, instalment!” said the actor one day. “Do you take me for a sewing machine?” Then seeing the author glaring from the wings he quickly added “forsooth!”

The saddest memory in regard to *Dorothy* is that of Henry J. Leslie. He was a city accountant whose business fell in the way of theatrical and music-publishing enterprises; he was an exceptionally fine organist, and composed some admirable music. He snatched at the chance of buying *Dorothy* and became extraordinarily rich. The secret of his downfall cannot here be told, although it will come back to many old stagers. With part of the money he made he built the Lyric Theatre, at the time looked upon

as the most beautiful house in London. It is a curious fact that many of the business details of this concern are to this very day involved. Leslie produced several more operas there, but without particular success. He lost his fortune, disappeared to New York, and, it is even said, had to beg his bread in the streets. By some means he got home to London, penniless, stricken by blindness, and soon he died.

CHAPTER IX

“THE BELLE OF NEW YORK”

A Failure in New York—How Edna May was found—An Old-time Manager—The Invasion of the American Chorus—Record of the *Belle*—Her Huge Fortune

NOT so long since across the luncheon-table at the Savoy one saw a sombrely draped girlish figure—a Dresden shepherdess in widow's weeds. It was *The Belle of New York* of twenty years ago, become the heiress of a millionaire. I suppose that if one could add sentiment to statistics it would be hard to judge the winner, in popularity, between the *The Belle of New York* and *Les Cloches de Corneville*. Years, of course, give the latter the advantage. Both, in the first instance, failed—to be worked up to success by indomitable management. Neither has been inactive since its introduction to London. Each owed to accident a notable feature of its triumph—in the case of *Les Cloches* the tensely tragical Gaspard of Shiel Barry; in the case of *The Belle of New York* the virginal purity in voice, in style, in changeless bearing, of Edna May.

Charles McLellan, the writer, as Hugh Morton, of *The Belle of New York*, is dead. His musical partner, Gus Kerker, still flourishes. McLellan developed a passion for writing problem plays, of which one,

Leah Kleschna, probably made him a fortune too. Another, *The Strong Men*, was a desperate disappointment to him.

He was a sickly lad, and the brilliant college career that seemed the threshold of professional life led him, instead, an invalid to the mountains. He took to writing for a pastime, and became a contributor of social satires and short stories to a well-known New York journal of the smart style, *Town Topics*; eventually its editor. He developed a facility, too, as a writer of bright books for music.

There is a second McLellan, George, now an important London manager, then in partnership with George Lederer as director of the New York Casino—nearly corresponding in style and conduct to our earlier Gaiety. The Casino had had a succession of failures and in the autumn of 1897 seemed to be in a bad way. Desperate for an attraction, George McLellan turned to his brother, who diffidently produced *The Belle of New York*. To this there were two objections. It had been “turned down” here and there and everywhere on account of the Salvation Army scenes, in regard to which the author was obstinate. In spite of this, another firm of management enforced a dog-in-the-manger-like priority of ownership.

This was overcome, and *The Belle of New York* was put into rehearsal. The casting of the play was managed easily, from the resources of the Casino, with a single exception. It seemed hopeless to find a suitable representative of the Salvation girl, and the rehearsals proceeded from day to day with a page-boy

reading the part from the manuscript, till he got terribly on the nerves of the anxious author.

To McLellan at this juncture entered a chorus girl. She had a friend, another chorus girl, with Hammerstein, for whom she wanted to procure an engagement. Her plea was heard, and a Miss Edna Pettie presented herself, so demure, so plainly clad, not to say so shabby, that she seemed quite unsympathetic to the atmosphere of the theatre. But she was engaged. More, as an alternative to the irritating page-boy, she was handed the manuscript to read, and the rehearsals proceeded to the eve of production. Then someone had a brain-wave. She was definitely engaged, and her ugly name was changed to Edna May.

Remains to be told that the first night was a sensational triumph? Not so. The audience was not deeply impressed. Worse still; the critic of *The New York Herald* had chosen to imagine himself deeply affronted at the Casino, and lay in waiting. His notice next day was in a few ill-chosen words, and the headlines ran :

LEGS, LINGERIE & VULGARITY ANOTHER CASINO PRODUCTION

Business languished. McLellan found a little encouragement from Charles Frohman, who dropped into the theatre quite casually and liked the play so much that he promised to recommend it to his friend George Edwardes, who might transport it to London. Edwardes' responding cable was prompt :

“I will have nothing to do with an American musical play.” The end seemed in sight.

McLellan and Lederer had had communications with another London manager, George Musgrove, in regard to the exploitation of a theatre site and now to him resorted. Musgrove, since dead, was a queer creature, self-opinionated and rough-spoken. Probably he made a quarter of a million of money out of *The Belle of New York*. He died poor. But, as the old novelists said, I anticipate. Musgrove was a London man, meant for a solicitor; but he married into a theatrical family, the Hodsons. Its founder was that George Hodson famous as an Irish comedian when the phrase had an exact meaning in the theatre. Mostly the costume adopted was a swallow-tailed coat of green, a red waistcoat, cord breeches, worsted stockings, brogues and a caubeen. The artist carried a bundle and a shillelagh; he danced and sang between the acts! Hodson managed that curious little theatre over Westminster Bridge, nursery of celebrities, including the “Great Little Robson,” actually the Bower Saloon, familiarly the “Sower Baloon.” Miss Henrietta Hodson and Miss Kate Hodson were his daughters. Another branch of the family made for Australia, with it George Musgrove, who became a theatrical manager and returned to England confident that he could reform its stage according to Australian methods. Poor chap! It was “the *Belle, et preterea nihil*.”

At the time of McLellan's cable to Musgrove he had control of the Shaftesbury Theatre, generally regarded as an unfortunate house. It had been cheaply run up for £20,000 by a Lancashire

merchant, John Lancaster, for the exploitation of his wife, Miss Ellen Wallis, as a Shakespearean actress. Old playgoers will remember that on the first night the iron curtain refused to go up on *As You Like It*, and the audience sadly dispersed through the dank passages. McLellan and Lederer feared the theatre, but accepted it. Musgrove suspiciously declined the play till he had seen it, and crossed to New York. In his surly way he agreed to it, but laughed at the American salaries of the artists.

Let him talk to them! He did, and Dan Daly, the Mr Bronson, the actual star, in receipt of the American equivalent of one hundred pounds a week, was first approached. He was a hot-tempered, foul-mouthed man.

"Call it fifty pounds a week, Mr Daly," said Musgrove.

"Go to hell, Mr Musgrove," said Daly, and walked out of the room.

Negotiations conducted in this spirit proved *difficile*; but in the course of time the original company was contracted for London, with one exception. The part of the polite lunatic was "created" by Mr Dave Warfield, a Jewish actor whom George Edwardes once described as "the greatest artist he had ever seen." America shares this view. London has lacked opportunity. Warfield in the meanwhile acquired a piece called *The Music Master*, with a part so fitting him that he has done little else. In London the polite lunatic was "Jimmie" Sullivan. Constant repetitions of the character tended to hurt him; but he is here again, effectively playing in

Uncle Sam. Two clever young people in the company, Harry Davenport and Phyllis Rankin, returned to America to marry, and became popular "duologue" performers on the variety stage. Frank Lawton, the whistling "tough," stayed here to cultivate the variety stage, and whistled himself into fatal consumption.

To the eve of sailing trouble pursued *The Belle of New York*. The cash guaranteed from the English side for the fares of the vast company was not forthcoming till the last minute. But at length "the goods" were delivered on the Shaftesbury stage. What a first night! Every song, every dance, every joke got home. Nothing proved so popular as the American chorus, with its wonderful vivacity, its individual interest never slackening. It sounded the death knell of the lymphatic show lady.

There were placed to the credit of *The Belle of New York* at the Shaftesbury Theatre six hundred and ninety-seven performances. The run might easily have been doubled, but Musgrove in a fit of temper took advantage of a technical flaw and put up the notice. The American parties accepted it without discussion and silently sailed away. In truth, they knew that a richer harvest still awaited them in America, where the once despised and rejected *Belle* has meanwhile become an institution too. The gross profits on the Shaftesbury season were upwards of £100,000. Incidentally, Miss May's salary was at the outset eight pounds a week, and might so have continued according to contract, but of course it did not.

But the strangest story of all attaches to the provincial rights. A scratch production at Margate, an uncomfortable hotel, a bad dinner and an unappreciative audience, impressed McLellan and Lederer with an intense desire to be delivered, as you may say, from "Hull, Hell and Halifax." They snapped at an offer of £2000 for their interest. At an eventual stocktaking it proved that the provincial rights had yielded the Musgrove estate £87,000. And *The Belle of New York* is still a valuable property on each side of the Atlantic.

CHAPTER X

DELIRIOUS DANCERS

The *Can-can*—Clodoche in London—An Incident of *Geneviève de Brabant*—Legmania—The Majiltons and the Girards—The Vokes Family—Pantomime Amenities

WHEN in 1871 Morton gave up his mosaic programme of excerpts from operas, farces and “singing between” at the Philharmonic, and did somewhat to redeem it from the affectionate description of its patrons, the “Dustbin,” he felt that even the charm of *Geneviève de Brabant* needed a spice, so he interpolated dances by “Mdle.” Sara, an ingrained Cockney, the toast of the young fellows as “Wiry Sal.” And on Boxing Night he superadded the genuine Clodoche.

Clodoche had indeed visited London some five years previously. He and his partners were introduced to a melodrama by Watts Phillips called *The Huguenot Captain*, at the Princess's Theatre, in the summer of 1866. It ran some months, and soon the *can-can* was the rage of London. Its most remarkable exponents were Finette, Colonna (Colonna being, I believe, an English girl, from whose troupe, in fact, evolved “Wiry Sal”) and “the celebrated” Esther Austin. The Payne family, one of whom became the famous clown, also danced the *can-can*, which was destined to lose the Alhambra its licence, and to involve F. C. Phillips, then, as Francis Fairlie, a

theatrical manager, and his colleagues at the St James's Theatre in a most unpleasant lawsuit—though it was allowed its fling elsewhere, and patronised by the Royal Family.

At Christmas, 1867, E. T. Smith produced a pantomime at the Lyceum, *Cock Robin*, by W. S. Gilbert. Its outstanding success was the *can-can*, danced by Finette. Said *The Mask*: "Everybody has heard of the *can-can* if they have not seen it. All the crowned heads of Europe went to see it at the Variétés last year, when danced by Schneider in *La Grande Duchesse*. The management of Covent Garden were frightened to produce it in the English version, and thereby destroyed the effect of one of the principal scenes. E. T. Smith has engaged Finette, who dances the *can-can* with a spirit and vigour we have never seen equalled. The restraint imposed by her upon herself does not deteriorate from the wonderful excitement of the dance, but rather adds a charm to its execution, and shows that it is performed by one of the most able of its professors. Finette is undoubtedly the greatest draw of the Lyceum pantomime." Finette proceeded to the Alhambra, where, in April, 1868, she appeared in a ballet called *Mabille in London*. It was not until 1871, on Colonna, that the wrath of authority outburst. And Colonna quite complacently proceeded on a provincial tour, with many competitors.

Hollingshead must needs plunge into the fray. To a Gaiety burlesque, Reece's *Ali Baba*, I think, he introduced the music-hall artists, Mr Ryley and Miss Barnum, known as the "Dancing Quakers," whom

outraged propriety quickly commended to the Lord Chamberlain. Hollingshead was induced to modify the offence to the Society of Friends, but the dance, the *can-can* pure and simple, was allowed to remain.

Clodoche was a wood-carver, and when eventually he settled in London for a term he furnished his Chelsea home with the substantial kitchen furniture of the time, which he transformed, with his carving tools, into "rare and curious specimens." Dancing was, at the outset, his recreation. With companions he used to frequent the opera balls in Paris, where they disported "such a way" that others stood by and admired, till a troupe was formed and became professional.

Clodoche probably exaggerated the dance, in the first instance, from the revolutionary Carmagnole. His original troupe was made up of men only; in its last years there were two women members. In the meanwhile there had sprung up "legmaniacs" enough to fill an asylum. A troupe of legmaniacs was an indispensable factor of every music-hall programme, and a familiar interpolation to burlesque, farce and pantomime, until so recently that you can link it with still current entertainment. Tom Wootwell, the Bert of *The Better 'Ole*, is one of the original Girards, or nearly. Mr A. J. Majilton, the Cochran *maître de danse*, is a member of that famous family. One of the Phoites is now a well-known poster artist; another is devoted to the commercial aspect of the stage. The Vokes family has disappeared from the face of the earth—professionally. Premature death is not the uncommon

lot of the infant prodigy, though there are some remarkable instances to the contrary. What has become of the Wises, deponent sayeth not. The Kiralfys, who first appeared here—Imre, Bolossy and Sister Anita—as eccentric dancers at the Oxford Music Hall, were quite recently prominent persons in the world of pleasure-making. Fred Vokes, who had been Phelps's call-boy, took his few lessons in dancing from Flexmore the clown, an immediate successor of Grimaldi. Flexmore in turn handed over his suit of motley to Harry Payne. The Vokes family, consisting of Fred, Victoria, Jessie and Rosina, with the eventual addition of an employee not related, were for years the mainstay of Drury Lane pantomime in Chatterton's day.

The Vokeses were the children of a theatrical costumier, and each took to the stage in turn to play the parts traditionally allotted to children. Their play at home inspired their combination as a "family," and their little comedies never lost that charm of spontaneity and childish improvisation. *The Belles of the Kitchen* was probably their best play.

Chatterton's smash at Drury Lane came in the early days of 1879. Harris made his serious beginning with a *Bluebeard*, 1879-1880. Harris declared to me that he "dreaded the tyranny of the Vokeses," and his first season was their last. One day his stage manager came to him with "a young fellow who declared that he could do with both legs what Fred Vokes could only do with one," for Vokes, like other dancers, cleverly concealed the less efficient of his legs. The youngster was Fred Storey, a

brilliant, erratic mime, who lately saw his daughter marry into the peerage and then died.

Chatterton took the Vokeses—less Rosina, the smartest of them all, who long “starred” in America on her own account—to Covent Garden. Twice in history it proved that a rather vicious attempt to compete with Harris came to grief—the second was the memorable fiasco at Her Majesty’s, when Charles Harris set out to become a great leviathan, with the costliest and least charming *Cinderella* ever known. A glance at the programmes of 1880 is interesting. The Vokeses, with the Lauris superadded, were Chatterton’s mainstay in *Valentine and Orson*, written by Burnand. Harris’s principal boy in *Mother Goose* was Kate Santley; his principal comedian, as Dr Syntax, Arthur Roberts. Blanches, D’Aubans, Cootes are scattered through the cast, as it might be to-day, and a Girard—Julien to wit.

I suppose the one man who gave Harris furiously to think was Oscar Barrett, whose *Blue Ballet* at the vanished Olympic contained more shades than in the sky there are; and whose Lyceum *Cinderella* established Ellaline Terriss—unforgettable for me, for it seemed but a few Sundays since Terriss had said: “Finish your cigar and come into the drawing-room. I want you to see my baby dance.” And she has changed so little!

CHAPTER XI

“MARIA MARTEN” AND “SWEENEY TODD”

The Demon Barber of Fleet Street—No such Person!—A Mediæval Sweeney—*The Murder in the Red Barn*—Forestalling the Cinema—Record Sale of a “Dying” Speech.

“MARIA MARTEN” has lately resumed her ghostly walk round the provinces, and two managers promise the revival of *Sweeney Todd*. If the Codlins should desire to enter into competition with the Shorts, they will find material to select from in a plenty; for a huge library of dramatic literature founded on sordid crime accumulated in the early part of the last century, not to mention those earlier classics, *Arden of Feversham*, which still adorns the repertory of Clunn Lewis’s puppet show, and *George Barnwell*.

When I was a young Londoner I was shown in Fleet Street the very shop of the demon barber—and shuddered to think that meat pies were still on sale there. And I read that an enterprising tradesman has again, by way of advertisement, labelled the new building erected on its site as the authenticated abode of the wretch. But in truth I believe there was no such person as Sweeney Todd, for fascinating research has brought me so far back as, and to a full stop with, a French ballad of the Middle Ages, just as *George Barnwell*, whom some folk

identify with a rascal summarily evicted from Camberwell—and from this world—in 1750, is celebrated in verse—*vide* Percy's *Reliques of Antient English Poetry*—many years earlier. It is conceivable that there was a scoundrel, deep-dyed as the ghastly Todd, in the dark, Georgian days of London. But, in fact, he had no more definite original than the hero of a French novel, *The String of Pearls*, translated for the *Penny Miscellany*, they say by George Augustus Sala, and promptly seized by a dozen dramatists. For years *Sweeney Todd* was a stock favourite at the Coburg, the Britannia, the Pavilion and the Effingham Saloon. Bancroft played Sweeney during his Birmingham novitiate. And the character was in the repertory of every stroller.

In a tiny volume of strange cases I find the record, professing authenticity, of a “Horrible Affair in the Rue de la Harpe, Paris,” where travellers were said to have been murdered by a barber, robbed, then passed through a subterranean passage to a pie shop next door. The bodies were found by a dog—sometimes “starred” in the plays—who missed his master. Here is the earlier ballad, with a translation by that most erudite authority on French dramatic literature, Mr Arthur Shirley :

“Ca remonte au moyenage,
C'était en l'an douze cents.
Un merlan vrai sauvage
Coupait le cou de ses clients.
Rue des Marmousets vingt-quatre

82 “MARIA MARTEN” & “SWEENEY TODD”

Il faisait son noir trafic,
 Inutile de se débattre,
 Dans son caus—on faisait conic
 Il avait ce perruquier,
 Pour complice in pâtissier,
 Pour complice un pa—
 Un ti—un sier—
 Un pâtissier.
 Ah ! Ah !

Cette légende atroce,
 Ajoute que le pâtissier,
 Était une femme féroce,
 Plus féroce qu'en huissier !
 Avec tous les pauvres diables
 Qu'ils égorgeaient nom d'em nom
 Ces monstres abominables,
 Faisaient des pâtes de jambon !
 Et dans tout ça voila ce que c'est
 C'est le client qui pâtissait
 C'est le client qui pa
 Qui ti—qui sait—
 Qui pâtissait.
 Ah ! Ah !”

(AIR.—*Le Jeune Homme Empoisonné.*)

This is Mr Shirley's version :

“ About the year eleven hundred or so
 There lived a sort of demon barber,
 Who slit his client's wizzens.
 At 24 Rue des Marmouzets
 He carried on this horrid trade
 And nobody could resist him,
 In his cellar—he polished 'em off,
 Having for his accomplice
 A villainous pie merchant next door.
 With a pie—with a mer—with a chant,
 With a pie—mer—chant ! Ah ! Ah !

This horrible tale also tells us
That he worked with a ferocious female
Fiercer than the fiercest bailiff,
For all the poor devils he killed
His partner converted into pork pies !
And he said of his customers when defunct,
They are gone 'pork—creatures,'
With a pork—with a cre—with a ture.
Pork creature ! Ah ! Ah !”

(To be sung to the tune of *The Young Man who Was Poisoned*.)

Few trials for murder have so stirred the country as did that of William Corder, who shot and stabbed his paramour, Maria Marten. *The Times* reported the proceedings verbatim. And yet it was a squalid business—impossible to give it a glamour of romance, or the quality of mystery. Maria was nearly twenty-six, good-looking, we are told, the daughter of a farm labourer living at Polstead in Kent. She had three illegitimate children, by various fathers, and when with the support of her stepmother she began to exert pressure on the father of the third, William Corder, he murdered her and concealed his crime with so much skill that it was not revealed till Maria's mother spoke of dreams, which led to the discovery of the body, and to the arrest and conviction of William. The dreams gave a supernatural interest to the story—but village scandal said that Mrs Marten did not recall her dream till Corder grew lax in remittances !

Maria's first lover was Thomas Corder, an elder brother of William. He was drowned, and their child died. Her second lover was an “independent

gentleman of Woking" whose name was sedulously guarded by the reporters of the trial. He made penitent payments to Maria, which William Corder intercepted. The offspring of this second union lived many years, in Colchester, and would threaten to invoke the magistrates to prevent performances of *Maria Marten* by strollers unless he were mollified—surely the most curious collection of a royalty ever known! William Corder's child died; but there is not the least evidence in support of the allegation that he did away with it.

William Corder was a short, weak-legged, weak-eyed creature, who came into a thousand or so as the older members of his family, well-to-do farmers, died. He was living in London when Maria and her people, her second lover, the Woking gentleman, acting in concert, became importunate. He agreed to marry Maria, making the stipulation that she should leave home secretly, disguised in a man's clothes which he provided, to join him. Maria was never seen again alive. Corder wrote regularly, saying that she was well and happy, acting as companion to a lady, having deferred their marriage. Months passed, till Mrs Marten's disturbed slumbers induced a search-party to the Red Barn on the Corders' farm. Here the body was found, lightly covered with earth, over which the fruits of the corn harvest had been piled. Corder proved to have been long married, at Ealing, to an amiable schoolmistress, who had answered an advertisement in *The Sunday Times*, and who was loyal and tender till his last breath. After his execution an accumulation of letters addressed to an agency

in response to a matrimonial advertisement was earmarked to Corder, and published.

Corder defended himself obstinately. His last story was that after a bitter quarrel Maria shot herself and that in terror of suspicion he hid the body. But his case was hopeless, and ere his execution he confessed, though he persisted that he never used a knife. Justice was carried out with almost Scriptural savagery. The body, half naked and half dissected, was exposed to public view, and the skeleton of the wretched creature was made a permanent exhibit. In the Free Library at Bury was deposited a verbatim report of the trial, bound in Corder's skin.

Many thousand people witnessed the execution, and it is said that a man who returned to Bury from the ghastly entertainment was so wearied by inquiries as to whether or no Corder was really dead that he took refuge in the local theatre, where a performance of *Macbeth* was in progress. "Is justice done on Cawdor?" were the first words he heard. "Yes," he cried, "I saw him hanged at Norwich this morning; and I'll answer no more questions."

Maria's murder was depicted on the stage with the alert enterprise of the modern cinema. Polstead Cherry Fair took place between the arrest and the execution of Corder, and complaint was made to the judge of Assize that "peep shows" of the tragedy abounded. One of them founded the fortune of "Lord" George Sanger. At Bartholomew Fair during the same year a hundred pounds was taken in a booth exhibiting "Corder's" head—a plaster cast, no doubt. A novel based upon the crime was published,

its anonymous author being, they say, Dr Maginn—"bright, broken Maginn," Thackeray's Captain Shandon—and on this novel innumerable plays were based. The first I have been able to trace was done at the Pavilion Theatre, Mile End, the work of one West Digges, produced within a few weeks of the trial. Of course there is a vision, Maria appearing to William on the eve of his execution, with the assurance: "William, William, thy poor Maria pities—pities and forgives thee." The ballad and "last dying speech and confession" is said to have reached a sale of 1,166,000 copies. Here is an extract:

"I promised I would marry her upon a certain day,
Instead of which I was resolved to take her life away.
I went into her father's house the eighteenth day of May,
Saying: 'My dear Maria, we will fix the wedding day.'"

An elaborate "set" of the scaffold and the actual enactment of the execution was reserved for gala nights. There is record of an ugly disturbance when once, at Cambridge, the performance stopped short of this delectable scene. The manager apologised that the actor was suffering from overwork—and even declined to accept the suggestion that he should "take the curtain" duly haltered by way of a compromise! After a little controversy "the audience slowly, and with manifest reluctance, left the house."

CHAPTER XII

“SWEET LAVENDER”

History of Terry's Theatre—The Coal Hole—Terry's Early Struggles—*Sweet Lavender*—The Tragedy of Rose Norreys—Theatrical Rents

“LAST time, Clemmy my boy, last time.” So Dick Phenyl used to protest his reformation. Will there ever be a last time of *Sweet Lavender*? Pinero's play ran from its production on 21st March 1888 six hundred and seventy nights. It was again and again revived. It was toured year in and year out, and still it has valuable vitality.

Of few dramatists has it been the fate to mark three epochs in the history of the English stage. *The Profligate* was not the first “problem” play, but it was the first to which the description was arbitrarily applied. A series of characteristic farces at the Court Theatre swept French filth away for years. With *Sweet Lavender* Sir Arthur Pinero filled the air again with a fragrance like that of the Robertson comedies. In each case new impulses were stirred in every playwright. The material results were probably most remarkable in the instance of *Sweet Lavender*. They are my business, not the discussion of evolutions!

If it be true that Terry's Theatre, which for a long time has been a “picture house,” is to be absorbed in

the structure of a vast hotel, it returns to its earliest employment. Here stood the Coal Hole, from which Thackeray elaborated his pictures of old-time song and supper rooms—though, be it noted, the Cave of Harmony cannot be exactly identified with the Coal Hole, nor the Back Kitchen with the Cave of Harmony. It is easier to recognise the characters. The Coal Hole was the property of men named Rhodes, father and son. Here, till a very late hour of the night, homely suppers were served from side-boards laden with silver tankards that were the pride of the house. The younger Rhodes is said to have been the original of Hoskins; Charles Sloman, the "only English improvisatore," was certainly "little Nadab."

In the course of time the musical entertainments at the Coal Hole ceased. It was one of the many homes of "Baron" Nicholson with his salacious Judge and Jury show. The house was acquired by Charles Wilmot, an Australian actor, and his wife, a buxom, hospitable dame known as "Coo-ee." It became, as the Occidental Tavern, a great resort of actors, who were generously allowed credit. Could the "slate" of the Occidental be reproduced it were an interesting document indeed! Wilmot found his way back to the stage. At the Duke's Theatre, Holborn, he produced, in partnership with that weird creature, Clarence Holt, the prototype of Drury Lane drama, *New Babylon*. He was, at the Grand Theatre, Islington, a pioneer of the suburban theatre. In conjunction with a Dr Webb—the three men formed a friendship in Australia—Wilmot built

Terry's Theatre for the comedian at a cost of something like £30,000. It was eventually sold to him for £40,000. That fortune was made out of *Sweet Lavender*.

Terry was a London youth, related to neither the famous Scotch actor nor to the great family of the Terrys. When he took to the stage he knew all the hardships of the stroller. He served a rough but invaluable apprenticeship with Calvert, the Manchester manager. And when he eventually came to London—to the Strand Theatre, with a far greater claim than the Gaiety to be described as the home of burlesque—it is probable that his unexampled success in that form of entertainment was due to his saturation with the traditions of the Shakespearean clown, and to his complete technical education. Terry was one of Hollingshead's first selections for the Gaiety, where he became the linch-pin of the historic quartet. His salary there was eventually £100 a week, with certain privileges as to provincial touring; and when the fortunes of the house began to sway he was the first to leave. He first adventured at the Olympic, then became the lessee and manager of Terry's Theatre. This he opened in October, 1887, with a play called *The Churchwarden*. The part was congenial, for Terry had an obsession for parochial work—as a Poor Law Guardian, a magistrate, a churchwarden. His spare time he gave up to Freemasonry. He was “snowed over” with regalia.

Terry's Theatre was not at the start a remarkable success, and the actor manager resorted to Pinero,

who had already supplied him with a clever farce called *In Chancery*. Now let Sir Arthur Pinero tell the story of *Sweet Lavender*. He once gave a recipe for play-writing to an aspirant: “You take a good old stock story about a will found under a sofa cushion or something of that sort. You fit in a set of conventional characters. You spend three months in developing them. Then you fling away your story in disgust or despair. Then you spend three more months developing a new story to your characters—and there’s your play.”

In the original *Sweet Lavender* there was no Dick Phenyl—just a conventional old-man part on Terry’s lines. Dick Phenyl was reincarnated from a first act cast aside by the author—not a definite portrait, though his double was afterwards indicated in the Law Courts as the “original.” Terry heard the reading of the play in silence; never discussed it with the author; never expressed an opinion on it. With pardonable curiosity Pinero said at rehearsal to Brickwell, the manager: “Brickwell, do you happen to know what Terry thinks of this piece?” “No,” said Brickwell; “the only remark the gov’nor has ever made to me about it was, ‘This is a nice drunkard Pinero has given me to play!’”

Sir Arthur Pinero owns to an immense interest in the rehearsals of *Sweet Lavender*. From his boyhood an ardent playgoer, one of his idols at the Grecian Theatre was M. A. Victor, another, Carlotta Addison, respectively the Mrs Gilfillian and the Ruth Rolt. It was fascinating to have them brought from the clouds, so as to speak, to become his incar-

nate creatures. Both have left this earthly stage now. Death, indeed, has levied a heavy toll on the original cast — Edward Terry, Sant Matthews, Brandon Thomas, who could write such a wild farce as *Charley's Aunt*, compose quaint negro ditties as *I lub a Lubblly Gal, I do!* and sing them incomparably to his own banjo or pianoforte accompaniment, and play such parts as Geoffrey Wedderburn with a rare and rather ponderous dignity.

Saddest case of all is that of little Rose Norreys, with her mass of burnished-copper hair, her great uncanny eyes, her genius. She was a girl of mysterious origin. She played in the first Pinero farces; she was Tree's leading lady for some time, being notably charming as the little lame girl in *The Dancing Girl*. She ranged to Nora in *A Doll's House*. And there were connoisseurs in acting who declared that she was on the eve of a great career.

One night, by an extraordinary accident, I heard that a Rose Norreys had been found in Hyde Park and remitted to Marylebone Workhouse as a wandering lunatic. I consulted with Edward Ledger of *The Era*, and at his request went to Marylebone. There sat the poor little soul, in pauper clothes, gazing into space with those wondrous, wondering eyes, talking without intelligence. A fund was raised which provided a few additional comforts. And all the meantime of twenty years has passed in mental obscurity and hopelessness.

Then Maud Millett made almost her first success as that type of the "creamy English girl" to whom, as Quex said, "we all must come at last."

Mr Fred Kerr, the first Horace Bream, was shortly followed by Mr Henry Dana, fresh home from his American ranch, and speaking the language like a native. A year or two later he left the stage, to become for twenty years the faithful friend and invaluable adviser of Herbert Tree.

Terry's Theatre had been allowed to fall into a somewhat slovenly method—a large free list had, for instance, been allowed to grow up, in order to encourage *The Churchwarden*. Pinero was accorded a free hand in manipulating the first night, and his drastic compression of the “complimentary” seats overlooked a well-known critic whose importance was not in fact equal to his celebrity. He arrived uninvited, and being interrupted on his course to the stalls, solemnly cursed the play, the playwright, the players and the playhouse, raising his hands to heaven and expressing the hope that the theatre might speedily be burned down. But these wishes were not fulfilled. The critics hailed a new Tom Robertson and the play quickly settled down to a career of success. It cost sixty-six pounds to produce, its largest salary, of course excepting Terry, being eighteen pounds a week.

Terry's ingrained parsimony soon had an opportunity. Memories of a boyhood spent in the Inns of Court had inspired the author's design of the simple scene—the lay-out of a modest set of chambers, the furniture somewhat of the shred-and-patch quality. It was supplied by a well-known theatrical firm at a weekly rate. When Terry saw he was in for a run

he bundled off this carefully chosen material, subtly and delicately shaded, and replaced it by a short and sharp purchase from Tottenham Court Road. It filled the stage, it was permanent stock, what did it matter that all the subtlety and delicate shading had gone? In the same spirit he could see no great value in the play as a provincial attraction and so let a second fortune slip through his fingers.

None the less he quickly made money enough to make a bid to Wilmot for the purchase outright of the theatre. Wilmot, not wishing to sell, named what he thought was a prohibitive price of £40,000 and was amazed when Terry promptly produced the cash. The house in those days had a letting value of £100 a week, including the bars. I believe in the recent boom Terry's had a letting value of £400 a week, excluding the bars, and that the capital value last affixed was double Terry's purchase price.

CHAPTER XIII

“CHARLEY’S AUNT”

“Still Running”—Penley and Brandon Thomas—Their Characteristics and their Quarrel—How *Charley’s Aunt* came to Town—Henry Dana—Fortunes made and lost

AN incident in *Charley’s Aunt* proved the rare inspiration of a poster artist. “Charley’s Aunt: still running,” was the inscription on a picture of a quaint old lady running for her life, her tucked-up skirts revealing most masculine underwear in the shape of trousers. That was twenty-seven years ago. The poster is actual to-day, and every Christmas, with a certainty, decorates the London hoardings. Yet at the outset *Charley’s Aunt* showed no such promise. Tentatively produced at a small provincial theatre, it ambled from town to town, and in one instance the audience was so small that it was thought better to dismiss!

Brandon Thomas, its author, was a man of rare charm and sweet nature. Tall, handsome, with the fine carriage of a somewhat soldier, he wore a monocle habitually with ease; he played the banjo as it might have inspired Kipling, likewise the piano, and the most joyous nights at the Savage were those when “Tommy” had been dragged to his feet

to give an impromptu entertainment. Eugene Stratton never sang *I lub a Lubbly Gal, I do!* with half the fascination that its author conveyed to it.

Thomas tried engineering and shipbuilding. He wrote a pamphlet critical of Moody and Sankey, the American evangelists, that nearly made him a journalist; he became an Institute entertainer, and then a letter of introduction to the Kendals made him an actor. To the end of his career he gave to certain parts a deliberate dignity quite incomparable.

He wrote a dozen plays, of which I think *Charley's Aunt* was the last to be produced. Penley incited him to the task. To Thomas occurred the idea of exploiting the little man in woman's clothing. It was received by the actor with delight; and so grew *Charley's Aunt*. I have heard that the farce was an adaptation. Not so; it was dictated, as it came from Thomas's brain, to his wife. Penley, it is true, elaborated his own part, till the belief obsessed him that he was the inspiration, if not the author of the play. Thomas's desire was to emphasise the sentimental side. The relations of the men in time strained to breaking-point. For Penley was an easy man to quarrel with. He was capable of the most generous actions, and, in sudden interludes, of the most spiteful.

He was at the time of commissioning *Charley's Aunt* already a well-known actor. He had been a Savoy chorister; later, bass singer at the proprietorial chapel of that clerical demi-rep the Rev. J. C. M.

Bellew (or Higgins). His first character of any importance was that of the foreman in *Trial by Jury*. He made a notable hit as lay Brother Pelican in *Falka*, and he was the third Private Secretary, in succession to Tree, who was not, as one so frequently hears, the first, but Arthur Helmore, the popular entertainer of to-day.

Penley's no doubt effective and profitable exaggeration of his part reminds one that when Robert Buchanan wrote *When Knights were Bold*, which he probably got from Mark Twain's *A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur*, he meant it for a romantic drama, which James Welch toured at a loss of nearly a thousand pounds. His was the inspiration to turn the play into a rough-and-tumble farce, out of which thousands were made. But Welch quarrelled furiously with the Buchanan party, to whom the bard's words were sacrosanct.

Charley's Aunt came at last to the Royalty in Dean Street, a then discredited house, whence the proprietress, Miss Kate Santley, had retired, somewhat weary of personal adventure there—although she had recorded at least one remarkable success—*The Merry Duchess*, a comic opera by an English composer, Frederick Clay, and an English author, Mr George R. Sims. This had for its central figure a kindly caricature of the sporting Duchess of Montrose, one of King Edward's intimate entourage. Her representative was a bright, beloved actress in comic opera, Kitty Munro, whose premature death caused poignant grief to hosts of friends. Frederick Clay, too, the writer of the

unforgettable *She Wandered down the Mountain-side*, died in the fullness of promise.

So dilapidated was the Royalty that at the third performance of *Charley's Aunt* the old Duke of Cambridge fell to the floor as he sat heavily in his stall. Characteristically, he swore like a trooper, then burst into hearty laughter.

Penley was financed in respect of *Charley's Aunt* by a well-known city man, Hartmont by name, who was rolling in money one day and eagerly in search of it the next. He agreed to put up £1000—the sum would be a wholly inadequate, indeed a ridiculous, provision nowadays. As a matter of fact, he was never called upon to find more than £650, so quickly did the old lady from the Brazils appeal to the popular imagination, and, let it be added, so carefully restrained was the expenditure.

This was just as well, for Hartmont was bluffing. He had been hard hit in the city, and, to the dismay and apprehension of his colleagues, only produced the £650 actually employed, in dribblets obtained from a money-lender. Moreover, he lost his faith in the play during the course of rehearsal at the Royalty, and roundly declared one day that he wished he was out of it. The quick retort of his companion, one of our shrewdest managers, that his release could probably be arranged in a few hours, suggested to him that there might be more in the play than he saw, so he obstinately stuck to it. Probably he made upwards of £60,000, but he died poor. Indeed, in no instance did the money stick. Both Thomas and Penley made comfortable fortunes—say £100,000

and upwards. In the course of time the copyright reverted to Thomas’s family, and, under the direction of his widow, an astute business woman as well as a gracious and charming lady, it is understood to yield a yearly income still of £2000 and upwards.

Penley’s business manager then, and for two and a half years thereafter, was Henry Dana. The son of a distinguished public man, Mr Dana toyed with the Bar and coquetted with the City, acquiring as intimate a knowledge of London life in the seventies as here and there one. He unblushingly admits that he was one of the vast crowd turned back from the Argyll Rooms on the occasion of the last night of the Argyll Rooms—for the police wisely determined there should be no last night, and arbitrarily formed a cordon round the approaching streets. Ardent and expert in every kind of sport, young Dana seized an opportunity of going to Western America, and for several happy years was a rancher. The defection of a partner turned him towards the stage, and for further years he acted. But from *Charley’s Aunt* onward to the Globe Theatre and Marie Löhr of to-day business management has been his engrossment. At one time, from his office in long-demolished Wych Street, *Charley’s Aunt* having proceeded to the old Globe, more spacious than the Royalty, he had the supervision of no fewer than forty companies playing *Charley’s Aunt*, not only in every English-speaking country, but in France and Germany, and all over the Continent.

Meanwhile, at the Globe, Penley was able to indulge his pleasant propensity for hospitality by giving huge parties on the stage on the hundredth, the five-hundredth, the one-thousandth, and on any intervening nights that afforded an excuse.

It is safe now to reveal the fact that he appeared himself fewer times by many than the public was aware of. He collected a group of young actors physically like him, and apt to copy his mannerisms, partly for the supply of the touring companies, but also to understudy him. He would whimsically appear in one act, and send on an understudy for the second, the deceit being undiscovered. Penley was at one time a very rich man, worth probably £150,000, but he was amazingly obstinate and unfortunate in his speculations. He bought the Novelty Theatre—as, after many changes of name, and more to come, it was then known—convinced that it would be repurchased from him at a huge profit when Kingsway came along, sweeping through Clare Market. But the Novelty Theatre was passed by. Of course it commands a preposterous rent to-day, something, I believe, in the neighbourhood of £300 a week! Once it went begging at £20 a week! I have seen a Parsee opera company there, a mesmeric entertainment, heard a “not proven” suspect lecture on an alleged murder that was a world’s wonder, remember a young actor shot on its stage with a carelessly managed pistol in a melodrama, and seen an angry crowd throw the seats at unsatisfactory prize-fighters! It is now a respectable house and a valuable property, but Penley lost

a good deal of money there, as he did in real estate depreciated by a sewage farm near his Woking home. I am afraid that even the ten thousand and odd pounds disclosed in probate was illusory.

CHAPTER XIV

“A PANTOMIME REHEARSAL”

An Amateur Impromptu—The Beginnings of the Vokes Family—Rosina runs away—The Discovery of Weedon Grossmith—Early Entertainers—Touring America—A London Run

A TRIPLE bill is usually a case of *Ma Femme et quelque Poupées*. Emphatically so it was with *A Pantomime Rehearsal*, which managed a record of four hundred and thirty-nine performances, but with a constant change of the other factors. Lacking such a staple as Cecil Clay's sketch, I have never known a triple bill succeed. Mr Cochran tried one a year or two ago, at the Ambassadors. An exquisite production of *Le Malade Imaginaire* proved caviare to the general. The other plays bored. The manager told me his hair whitened in the process of reading hundreds of ineffectual one-act plays.

Cecil Clay's *A Pantomime Rehearsal* is, in fact, just what, in ignorance of its origin, you would suspect it to be—an impromptu exercise in high spirits. The late Sir Percy Shelley had a passion for the stage. At his town house, in Tite Street, Chelsea, and at his country place, Boscombe, he had a perfectly equipped theatre, where frequent performances were given by amateurs, with often distinguished professional assistance. At Boscombe, in 1884, he

had a house-party, invited to witness, in particular, a performance of *The Parvenu*. It seemed that the second day might hang heavily on their hands, and someone suggested a kind of charade. Cecil Clay was among the guests, his wife too, the beautiful and accomplished Rosina Vokes, and her sister Victoria. Cecil Clay set to work on *A Pantomime Rehearsal*, which was in some shape in a few hours—the actors and actresses did the rest. The orchestra was supplied by the original German Reed, already an old man, to whom the Vokes girls hummed some of the songs of their entertainment, from which inspiration he vamped at the piano. So came into existence probably the most popular one-act play of modern times. Amateurs love it still—but they have to borrow a manuscript, for it has never been printed. During its eventually long career in America it was a constant anxiety to spot predatory shorthand writers and eject them from the theatre. In the original cast were the Vokes sisters, the Hon. Mary Boyle, a fine amateur actress, the brothers Claud and Eustace (or "Scrobbie") Ponsonby, and Sir Percy Shelley, an accomplished artist, who actually worked on the scenery as the play progressed.

Among many clever "families" the Vokeses were distinguished and unique. Their father was a theatrical costumier, and the youngsters one by one took to the stage, to play, with actors such as Creswick, Phelps and Barry Sullivan, the Little Princes in *Richard*, Mamillius in *A Winter's Tale*, Henri in *Belphegor*, and so forth. Fred Vokes

spent part of his time as an assistant to Professor Anderson, the "Wizard of the North," and would be "vanished" beneath tin cones, discovered in portfolios, and so forth, to his great discomfort. Papa Vokes, who did not think so much of the stage as a vocation, made a skilful tailor of his son, in intervals. The antics of the youngsters at play suggested to an aunt the association of the Vokes children, whom she trained to interpret, according to their imagination, playlets of her devising. And the Vokes family became world-famous. The first break in their unity came when Cecil Clay stole Rosina, the brightest and best. Then Jessie died; but, with other associates, Fred and Victoria continued to work well into the eighties. All died in the near neighbourhood of forty, which seems to prove that the tendency of the infant prodigy is toward exhaustion. I could cite of instances a score—though there are notable exceptions.

On her marriage Rosina retired from the stage. But—*On y reviens toujours*. Shortly after the Boscombe production of *A Pantomime Rehearsal* she formed a company, and crossed to America, where she was idolised for several seasons. *The Pantomime Rehearsal*, *The Circus Rider*, plagiarised as *The Fair Equestrienne*, and *My Milliner's Bill* were probably her most successful media. But she adventured to such ambitious work as Sydney Grundy's clever play, *The Silver Shield*, *Caste* and Pinero's *Schoolmistress*. When *A Pantomime Rehearsal* was in rehearsal itself on the stage of the Brooklyn Theatre there was an amusing incident.

Mr "Willie" Elliott, in his character of the harassed author, vigorously reproached Lily and Lord Arthur for apparently insulting him by the persistent performance of an idiotic duet. Two members of the theatre staff, thinking the scene serious, begged Miss Vokes and Lord Arthur to retire to the capacious and comfortable green-room, where they could proceed with their work in immunity from annoyance!

Theatrical life in America, especially on tour, is strenuous and has its hardships, but it has also its plentiful humours. Once in the early morning, in a small city, Mr Cecil Clay awaited the band, to try over the music, in respect of which he was fastidious. Arrived a sturdy fellow with a trombone. "And the other gentlemen?" said the suave Cecil. "Oh!" was the reply, "they're engaged for a garden-party." "So you're to run over the music on the trombone?" "That's so," said the artist. "On which, I am sure, you are an excellent performer!" "Yes," said the trombonist; "that's why I'm not at the garden-party." In the event the trombone orchestra was courteously transformed into a member of the audience at the first performance, and the musical accompaniments were supplied, on the piano, by the versatile members of the company, including Felix Gottschalk, who became, under the Frohman management, one of the most popular character actors in America.

In the spring of 1890 Mr "Willie" Elliott, meanwhile returned to England, cabled for permission for the old stagers to do *A Pantomime Rehearsal* at Canterbury. And then, in 1891, came

its serious introduction to the London public, at Terry's Theatre. Mr Weedon Grossmith was again the Lord Arthur Pomeroy—it is certain he has never been equalled in the part. It is doubtful if he ever had a better. Mr Charlie Little was already dabbling in that kind of journalism at which, as the society editor of *The Daily Mail*, he lived to see himself exquisitely caricatured by a well-known dramatist. His death was due, I suspect, in a measure to his social popularity.

George Edwardes found the capital for the venture at Terry's, but it was not a remarkable success, and he tired. But the courage of the adventurers was indomitable. They moved on to the Shaftesbury, to Toole's, to the Court, and when at length their triumph was completed they had a record of four hundred and thirty-nine performances. They might have gone further, but other engagements prudently entered into, in the belief that the triple bill could not endure for ever, at length disbanded the company. There had been many mutations of the bill, except that *A Pantomime Rehearsal* stood firm—and there were many mutations of its cast, which at various times included Edith Chester, Beatrice Lamb, Rose Norreys, Ellaline Terriss, Brandon Thomas and May Palfrey. With amateurs *A Pantomime Rehearsal* is an enduring favourite.

Circumstances never permitted Rosina Vokes to play the part of Lily, in England, after the Boscombe experiment. This everybody regretted—and especially those who, in America, knew how her brilliancy, her perfect knowledge of the stage, her exquisite

dancing and her ebullient humour vitalised the play and all her adoring companions.

To Cecil Clay Weedon Grossmith owed, not his inspiration to the stage, but his first effective engagement. He was the son, and I think the grandson, of a popular entertainer. In the sixties and seventies there were dotted about the country Mechanics Institutes, Literary and Philosophical Societies, and Athenæums that gave, during the winter, a series of entertainments and mildly educational lectures. The cinema and the travelogue had a forerunner in one B. J. Maldon, whose discourses on world wars were profusely illustrated with magic lantern slides. A whimsical-looking old gentleman named Walter Rowton gave incomparable readings from Dickens; another, whose name I forget, discoursed of "Sea Songs," and sang them in a tenth-rate tenor. They would arrive with a shabby dress suit in a shabby bag. They were mostly supped, bedded and breakfasted by the Mayor, and they departed with an eagerly appreciated fiver to their clerkly desks. Such a one was George Grossmith, senior, in the intervals the officially recognised reporter at Bow Street Police Court.

Weedon Grossmith first practised the pictorial art. As a painter he was not a failure—by no means. But he did not earn a comfortable income. At an Eton and Harrow match at Lord's he met Cecil Clay, who, knowing of his desire to become an actor, offered him an engagement with the American company, then in process of formation—it included Brandon Thomas, Willie Elliott, Edith Chester

and Courtenay Thorpe—at the generous salary of fifteen pounds a week. It was accepted without hesitation, and Grossmith made his first nervous appearance at Liverpool, on the eve of sailing. Rosina Vokes had the technique of the stage at her finger-tips, and the genius of kindly, tactful, discerning tuition, as Grossmith always gratefully acknowledged.

In America the beginning of the travellers was uncertain, thanks mainly to the unstable management with which the early contracts were made. Then the triple bill proved their salvation; and especially *A Pantomime Rehearsal*, in which Grossmith, making a bold departure from the conventional Dundreary English swell, made up as a composite reproduction of three well-known men about town and, as the theatrical phrase is, “created a furore.” In the course of time he was succeeded by Felix Morris, a wonderful American actor of “character” parts, whom we saw here at the Strand, as the old Scots professor in *On Change*, and by “Mons.” Marius, whose troubled career in England had made America a refuge, and who played it to admiration as an irascible Frenchman!

CHAPTER XV

“THE PRIVATE SECRETARY”

His Original Exponent—Not Beerbohm Tree—Humours of his Performance—A Disastrous Season—Touch and Go at the Globe—Imperturbable Hawtrey—Nearly a Thousand, not out

IT is one of the stubborn fictions of reminiscence that Tree was the first Private Secretary. Not so; the first Private Secretary was Arthur Helmore, nowadays popular as a society entertainer. But it is the fact that much of the “business” that has become conventional to the interpretation of the part was mischievously invented by Tree. Moreover, the character corresponding to that of the Rev. Robert Spalding is quite different in the original German farce by Von Moser. It is indicated by the title, *Der Biblioteker*—or “The Librarian.” When Charles Hawtrey, a son of the famous Eton master, being somewhat short of twenty-five, translated Von Moser’s farce, he changed the character into that of a clergyman, and mischievously caricatured a family friend, longtime the chaplain of Strangeways Prison. Parson Truss took the joke in such good part that he never missed a performance of the farce when it came his way, and was the most delighted member of the audience.

Mr Hawtrey had already been on the stage two or three years. He made his first appearance as Edward

Langton, in *The Colonel*, at the Prince of Wales Theatre, and often repeated this performance. *The Private Secretary* was tentatively produced at the Theatre Royal, Cambridge, on 14th November 1883. Capital to the extent of a few thousand pounds was provided, and in the spring of the following year Edward Bruce was good enough to place the Prince's Theatre at the disposal of the young adventurer. He had built it with part of the fortune he made out of *The Colonel*; and he was nearly ready for the production of *Called Back*, dramatised from the phenomenally popular novel of Hugh Conway, which first brought the phrase "shilling shocker" into use. For the part of Paolo Macari he had engaged Beerbohm Tree, then in the first flush of fame as a representative of uncanny foreigners; and for the part of Pauline March, Miss Lingard, who had but recently returned from America, where she had developed from one of the music-hall Sisters Dunning, great favourites at the old-time Canterbury. Bruce demanded the then heavy rental of £150 a week for the theatre, which was free for eight weeks only, and further imposed the condition that certain members of the company on his hands should be used up in casting *The Private Secretary*, although they were quite unsuitable, and could never have occurred to an experienced *metteur en scène*, as Hawtrey now is, casting a play with a free hand. Tree, on his part, was furious to think that he had to play the part of the Private Secretary, and deliberately, even outrageously, exaggerated it. The season was an utter failure, and ended coincidentally with Mr Hawtrey's capital.

In a desperate state of mind he met Mr J. L. Shine, who, with Hollingshead, had the Globe Theatre in Wych Street on his hands. They had just ended a disastrous season of comic opera and were prepared to hand over the theatre for a song—£125 a week, the first month's rent to be paid in advance. Hawtrey had in sight £500 offered for the provincial rights of *The Private Secretary*, and, in the true spirit of speculation, took the Globe, drawing for the rent against the country rights cheque—which, he was soon advised, would not be met. It is part of the story that the country rights, withheld from the defaulter, and eventually worked by Mr Hawtrey and his confrères, produced them upwards of £40,000. *The Private Secretary* was in possession, but certain of eviction as soon as it transpired that the rent would not be forthcoming. Then it occurred to the trembling tenants that Shine and Hollingshead might not have power to sublet the theatre, which proved upon investigation to be the case. So the rent payment was "withheld" till this point should be settled, and for the time the course of the gentleman who didn't like London was clear.

It seems as though *The Private Secretary* had at once settled into a success at the Globe. "Billy" Hill, always enamoured of the play, and of his part, was at his best. Penley frankly adopted Tree's antics, and they seemed to become him as they had not become the other. He was troublesome, for he felt he had made a bad bargain and a success at the same time, and periodical increases of salary were found to be the only cure for oft-recurring illnesses.

But the end of the first week was marked by a potentially disastrous crisis. Hawtreys supposed that the good business would have made ample provision for the salaries of the company. When his treasurer asked him for the cash necessary to pay them, he learned that most of the business had been done with the libraries, in respect of the higher-priced seats; and the libraries would pay at their convenience! In a word, there was no ready money. To one versed in theatrical matters the matter would have been easy of adjustment. But in this respect Hawtreys was a novice. He resorted here, and there, to meet with repeated rebuffs. Saturday morning came, and, out betimes in search of money, the unhappy manager met with more rebuffs. At last he ran down his prey in a remote suburb, and having got the desired cheque was kept talking until he could only reach the bank and cash it with the aid of a racing hansom. Nerveless and perspiring, he had at any rate the presence of mind to halt at Romano's, fortify himself with a pint of champagne and stroll into the theatre the imperturbable Hawtreys that we have known and loved in a century of comedies. There was the company, scowling and despondent. "Hello," said the manager cheerily, "what's this? There's no *matinée*." "No," was the bitter retort, "it looks as if there were not! What about our salaries?" "Why, surely the arrangement was for to-night." More reproaches—till Hawtreys conceded that afternoon was just as convenient to him as evening might be, smilingly produced a bundle of notes—and was voted a fine fellow, with no dissentients. The play ran seven

hundred and fifty-eight performances; subsequent revivals ran to one hundred and thirty-nine performances and one hundred and sixty-one performances. There was a gentleman who played Hill's part, Cattermole, in the provinces for twenty-one years. The play is now the still productive property of French.

CHAPTER XVI

CRITERION COMEDY

French Farce via New York—The Germ of Obscenity—Wyndham's
Origin — A Business Comedian—*Pink Dominoes* and *Betsy*—
F. C. Burnand—Lottie Venne

OF late years it has been the habit of French farce with an obscene story to proceed from Paris to New York, thence to recross to London as though the ozonic breezes of the Atlantic had re-covered its rouged face with a healthy bronze that might make it presentable to decent English folk. This is in the way of a reversion to type, for the first "Criterion Comedy" came from America, forty years ago—not, in the first instance, to the Criterion, though it began a series of which Criterion Comedy was the accepted and distinctly understood description. *Brighton* was Bronson Howard's *Saratoga* adapted to English circumstance.

I often wonder if the schoolboys still secretly sing the shocking songs of one's youth—then hoary with tradition. I gathered lately from a youngster that the priapismic rites of the dormitory are much the same to-day as they were yesterday, and the day before, and discreetly refrained from further questioning. I recall an awful ballad recording the life and

death of an intrusive crayfish, who was chased as he might be a cinema comedian :

“They hit him on the head, and
They hit him on the side, and
They hit him on the back
Till the little beggar died.”

So, it seemed to me, the recipe for a Criterion Comedy was to seize upon a nasty notion and beat it through many doors—until it died.

Of course there was a later Criterion Comedy—as fragrant *Rosemary*; and a still later Criterion Comedy—the deft intrigue and delicately pungent dialogue of Henry Arthur Jones. But in old days, when every theatre sold its particular wares, and none other, as surely as bootmakers sell boots, Criterion Comedy meant that of which the wives of provincial clergymen spoke with bated breath when they came home from the May Meetings, admitting that they had succumbed to the debauchery of *Pink Dominoes*, but, as they qualified the confession, wearing thick veils! Now they devour *Home and Beauty* as shamelessly as they would gobble a bun at a counter.

Charles Wyndham is often described as the son of a “well-known doctor.” I suspect there should have been inverted commas to old Culverwell’s prefix. You may find his advertisements in the “popular” papers of the day; and I think he was interested in the delectable dirtiness of Dr Kahn’s museum. It’s a detail of his curative “system.” He owned baths near Regent Circus which flourished quite lately, the particles of their equipment being still branded with his name.

Eventually he became business manager for his distinguished son, and went to America. His ambition was to make a reputable practitioner of the lad, whose picture is before me—heavily bearded, a cocked sombrero, a surgeon-major in the American army.

Wyndham went abroad to escape the temptations of the stage in England. But it got him, thank goodness; and for fifty years he adorned it—graceful and fascinating even in Criterion Comedy, which he shook from his feet at last, and entered his kingdom, the captain of comedians.

You hear him spoken of as a keen man of business too. As a matter of fact, he was rather heedless and informal, but whatever he did came out right. If he refused an apparently promising proposition, a better came along five minutes later. He was a large buyer of plays, in which he often dealt profitably. After his death no fewer than four thousand manuscripts were found carefully stored in the private apartments he reserved at Wyndham's Theatre. He was extraordinarily lucky in respect of his speculations in theatres. He left nearly a quarter of a million—roughly in thirds to his widow, his son and his daughter, who married a well-known banker.

He had been on the stage upwards of ten years, and had accumulated such a repertory as an ambitious and painstaking young actor would, in those days, when he acquired *Saratoga* from Bronson Howard and had it rewritten as *Brighton*. It was done at the Court Theatre; and the critics saw new graces in the debonair, fascinating comedian as Bob Sackett,

whom they described as a "catholic lover." It was their witty way of saying promiscuous profligate! Wyndham eventually took *Brighton* on tour; and then he was invited by Alexander Henderson to join him, with the play, at the Criterion.

To-day this theatre commands, I suppose, a rental of £400 a week. Then it was a labyrinthine cellar, and the proprietors of the adjacent restaurant, Spiers & Pond, were willing to hand it over rent free—as you may say, to keep it aired. This was really done by an elaborate system of fans, the need for which got so well known that an old lady once asked anxiously at the box office what would happen to the audience if the machinery stopped. Ensued to *Brighton*, *The Divorce Case*, *Hot Water*, *Pink Dominoes*, *Truth*, *Fourteen Days*, *The Headless Man*.

It was during the performance of *The Headless Man*, in 1889, that the incident of "the man in the white hat" occurred. A gentleman rose in the upper circle and, declaring that he was the spokesman of a party, protested against the price of the programmes. Wyndham, from the stage, took up the quarrel angrily, addressing himself to "the man in the white hat," who, at the end of the entertainment, deposited a white tall hat on the centre of the balcony, and left it there. It was preserved in the theatre for years—it may be still.

But *Betsy* is in many respects the most remarkable of the Criterion Comedies. Wyndham did not appear in it, put it up, in fact, as a stopgap, and was shut out of his own theatre for upwards of a year, during

part of which time he resorted to a revival of *Brighton* at the Olympic. *Pink Dominoes* had the longer run—five hundred and fifty nights, as against *Betsy's* four hundred and eight performances. Forty years after, *Pink Dominoes* as *To-night's the Night* proved more popular than *Betsy* as *Oh! Don't, Dolly*, in her old home, the Criterion. But I imagine that in the meanwhile revivals of *Betsy* have been the more numerous and the more interesting. There was one at the Garrick so recently as 1902, and a very respectable one at the Coronet Theatre some fifteen years ago.

Bebe, the French original, was held to be impossibly indecent, and Burnand's skill in making it acceptable here was, in fact, prodigious. Burnand came of a Church and State family, and was intended for the Bar—was duly called, in fact. Meanwhile his father had turned him out of the house for becoming a Catholic; and Cardinal Manning had unbent his face to a smile when his *protégé* discovered that he had no vocation for the priesthood, but thought he had a "vocation" for the stage. "You might as well say that to be a cobbler has a 'vocation,'" said his Eminence; whereupon the eventual mangler of much English retorted that "a cobbler had a great deal to do with the sole."

A little acting sufficed. Burnand became a well-accustomed hack for the theatres. He conferred an inestimable blessing on dramatists by enforcing the rule, originating with Boucicault, of sharing in the profits of a play, instead of selling it outright for a song. But Burnand did nothing in his life so

remarkable in its way as *Betsy*. *Betsy's* original exponent is at this very day acting, as popular a favourite as ever—Miss Lottie Venne. “Do you know, my dear, I feel so bucked,” she said, as she stepped off the stage as the curtain fell on a recent *première*. “One of the stage hands slapped me on the shoulder and call me a —— little wonder.” Simple, no doubt sincere, and so true! It has, of course, to be remembered that when Miss Venne came to town, already an actress of experience, she was still in her teens. One of her first engagements was in *Happy Land*, the suppressed for one night only burlesque, by Gilbert, of his own *Wicked World*, at the Court Theatre. Miss Venne came in for special remark as the medium of an offending line. As a candidate for ministerial honours she was questioned about ships and shipping. “Please, sir, what is a ship?” she asked. The famous trio, representing Gladstone, Lowe and Ayrton, instantly bowed, and presented her with a folio, endorsed “First Lord of the Admiralty.” *Happy Land* had a long run, when the Censor was mollified.

Alfred Maltby, the Rev. Samuel Dawson of *Betsy*, was a creature of a curious temperament and fatal versatility. He had been an assistant to his father, a country draper, and the old man was wont to describe him as a genius lost to window-dressing! Probably this accounted for his taste and skill in theatrical “production”; for he was held to be good enough to stage-manage Gilbert and Sullivan. He wrote and drew for the comic papers; composed songs that sold; effectively adapted farces from the

French ; acted with rare unction—and had a habit of leaving home to play a game of billiards at the club, but sailing for Australia instead. He is dead. So is comfortable old “Billy” Hill ; so (in the flower of his youth) is Lytton Sothern. Dead too is Granny Stephens, the Mrs Birkett ; but, living to the ripe old age of ninety-three, she provided one more instance of the extraordinary longevity of the stage. George Giddens and Herbert Standing, two of the stalwarts of the Criterion, are, I believe, in America.

Miss Mary Rorke, in the flower of youth, was one of many Criterion *ingénues* who became serious actresses. She too is acting admirably, at this moment, in *The Choice*, gracefully accommodating her art to the years.

With *David Garrick*—mercifully I do not tell, for the hundredth time, the story of the chair at the club—the Criterion became sedate. Wyndham came out at his best in the theatre as *metteur en scène*. His ideas were good, he was patient and gentle in imparting them—never domineered or swore ; and never jealously guarded his own position as a star.

Twenty years elapsed ere French farce re-established itself, with added impudence, on the London stage, in the instance of *A Night Out*. And the difficulties that beset Burnand were overcome by simply ignoring them.

CHAPTER XVII

LONDON PLAYS

Tom and Jerry—A Picture of Pierce Egan—A Complacent Censor—
Charterhouse Characters—Barry Sullivan—*New Babylon*

FIFTY years ago Thackeray made a journey to the British Museum to renew his acquaintance with a book that had deeply engaged his imagination in his youth—*Tom and Jerry*. He was disappointed to the tune of a “Roundabout Paper,” which in turn would probably be described in curt terms of contempt by a “magazine page man” of to-day.

For myself, gratefully I admit I do not have to resort to the British Museum for my Pierce Egan. He knocked at my door one birthday morning with the inscription of my brother Arcadian, Charles Cochran. I love to touch the soft green skin, to run my eye along the tracery of gold, to follow the grotesque outline, and warm myself at the gay colour of the Cruikshank drawings. But Thackeray was right: one does not invite *Tom and Jerry* to the fireside—he feels quite sure the bowl would not be strong enough for those heroic roysterers.

There is, in Sala's *Life*, a picture of Pierce Egan in old age—for the reapers were tough-gutted who ate the wild oats of the early nineteenth century; and Pierce Egan was nearing eighty when he

tendered service of a column of sporting notes to the young and, I am sure, important editor.

Once the autocrat of the prize ring; the most erudite student of slang; the admired and accepted *viveur*; the author of *Tom and Jerry*, of *Life in London* and *Boxiana*, now "had a rather quavering voice, and a shrinking, shuffling manner, as though the poor old gentleman had found the burden of his life a great misery to him, and was yearning to shake it off. After a few glasses of rum punch the cockles of Pierce's heart were warmer; the old man became eloquent, he began to talk of Tom Spring, and Tom Belcher, Bob Grigson and other famous gladiators of the bygone; he told us of Jack Mitton and of Gully the pugilist, who retired from the prize ring to become, eventually, a Member of Parliament. He descanted on the cock-fighting, the bull-baiting, the badger-drawing, the ratting and dog and duck fighting he had seen in the brave days of old. He had known Shaw the Lifeguardsman, he had played billiards with Jack Thurtell." Egan's son, Pierce Egan, junior, was a prolific and prosperous writer of penny dreadfuls. *The Poor Girl* had a tremendous vogue.

Egan would be in the middle forties when he wrote *Tom and Jerry*—the adventures in London of the Regency of a country squire, with an experienced man about town as his mentor. They ranged from Tom Cribb's parlour to Tattersalls; from Almack's, the once aristocratic dancing club, of which we but recently lost trace as the air-raided Willis's Rooms, to a Venetian carnival. The sequence

of the scenes in the quickly ensuing plays might still serve for the structure of a Drury Lane drama.

Plays by the score were in hand ere Egan's pages were dry from the press. Moncrieff's was the standard version. He still endures in print, and ranks with *Don Giovanni* in London as his best play. But the first *Tom and Jerry* play was produced at Astley's, in September, 1821. By the spring of the following year versions were current at the Adelphi, the Olympic, the West London, the Surrey and Astley's. At the Coburg was opposed *Life in Paris*, with the same characters. Moncrieff's version ran two seasons, at the Adelphi. The Olympic version managed nine months. Egan was furious to think that the fruit of his brain should be impudently stolen. He tried his hand at a play himself, and tempted Robert Keeley, who had made a remarkable success as Jemmy Green at the Adelphi, northward, to Sadler's Wells; but that was not a successful adventure.

A protest to the authorities was made in respect of the Adelphi production, and the Lord Chamberlain presented himself, to confessedly enjoy the play, to bring his lady to a subsequent performance, and to come again and again during the run. It is said to have made upwards of £20,000 for the management, of which one would remark that, as a theatrical earning of those days, it was a large sum. One poor devil was ruined. A lame negro fiddler was a London character of the time, and he was persuaded to add to the realism of *Tom and Jerry* at the Adelphi. When he returned to the streets he

found his popularity was gone. As he fiddled he sadly intoned: "No lemon to him weal, no hoyster to him rump steak, de turkey widout de sausages." The sorrowful tale is completed by Blanchard with the declaration that poor Billy Waters was induced by starvation to St Giles's Workhouse, and died cursing *Tom and Jerry*.

There was a faint resemblance to Moncrieff's play in a recent Alhambra revue; but its last serious revival was by Joe Cave, at the Victoria—for the construction of which George Cruikshank lent his original drawings.

Moncrieff was the son of a Newcastle street tradesman. He died in the Charterhouse, as two later dramatists did—John Maddison Morton, author of *Box and Cox* and innumerable other farces; and Joe Cave, who last revived *Tom and Jerry*.

Of the theatrical brethren to-day the most notable is Odell, whose casual treatment of the rules caused the Master most politely to ask his guest to read them through. Adjusting a huge pair of horn glasses, Odell did so, and, handing them back with a smile, drawled: "I think I've broken them *all*."

It is a far cry from *Tom and Jerry* in 1821 to *New Babylon* and the Duke's Theatre in the seventies. The romance of London, and its realities, had appealed to dramatists in the meanwhile—to Andrew Halliday in *The Great City*, in which Mrs Kendal made an early appearance at Drury Lane, fortified by a real cab and a live horse; to Watts Phillips with *Lost in London*. Boucicault introduced a fire to *The Streets of London*, which he got from

Les Pauvre de Paris, and localised to any city of importance; a locomotive to *After Dark*, and a sentimental strumpet to *Formosa*. But it was reserved for *New Babylon* to pile the Ossa on Pelion of sensation; to set a formula which has stood in all the meanwhile—in a word, it was the prototype of that Drury Lane drama which has such subtle but such certain differences from the melodrama of the old Adelphi or the old Princess's.

Sefton Parry was the builder of the Holborn, which he opened on 6th October 1866, with Boucicault's *Flying Scud*. It ran two hundred and seven nights, thanks greatly to the performance of George Belmore, who married into the circus family Cookes, and was succeeded by a generation of actors and actresses. At the Holborn, in 1868, Barry Sullivan played, not his last season in London, but one so disastrous that he should have been assured that his day as a London actor of importance was over. And yet I avow a debt of deepest gratitude to the noisy and monumentally vain old actor. In his tours of the provinces, during many years, he kept alive a score of plays that have never come within the view, I suppose, of half-a-dozen of the critics enclosed in London—*The Gamester*, *The Wonder*, *The Wife* and *Love's Sacrifice* among them. He was an excellent Richard of his school, an excellent Richelieu—and a Claude Melnotte as bad as that of a greater actor.

There was an interesting season here, I recall, of *Sardanapalus*, which might very well interest some modern *metteur en scène* with spacious ideas. It was

directed by Tom Charles, who preferred provincial to London management, though he did take in hand a notable burlesque for George Edwardes. Charles's pantomimes, in which George Dance was schooled, were known through the theatrical world. He got his wonderful sense of colour as a silk mercer in St Paul's Churchyard. He was a fine pianist, and began his career in the theatrical world as manager for another—Blind Tom, a slave, whose generous master cultivated his talent for music, and himself grew rich on the musician's earnings. It was often pointed out to Tom that, in free countries, he might seize his freedom, but he was content with the provision made for him, and his last years were spent happily on the old plantation.

Tom Charles was killed in early middle age in a carriage accident. His leading lady in *Sardanapalus* was a beautiful lady, Monta Gainsborough, a pupil of rough-spoken, capable old "Jack" Ryder. Miss Gainsborough is now, I believe, a Bloomsbury matron. She inspired, in *Sardanapalus* times, such a passion in a now white-haired critic of the drama that he used to spend the small hours gazing upon her lattice.

In 1878 Clarence Holt and Charles Wilmot took the theatre. Holt was a rough-and-ready kind of actor, who acquired a considerable reputation at home and abroad. In his time he must have made a good deal of money, but in old age he was grateful for the prescience of his father, a Bond Street tailor, who had no belief in the stage, and securely settled a small income on his son. Holt's last engagements

were with Harris, whose curiously mixed nature included a tenderness for decrepit actors. He always had a few in his company, and stuck to them stubbornly though they were frightfully troublesome. In other aspects he was a martinet, as I was reminded at his funeral. The line of the procession broke badly. "Gawd," said a stage carpenter near me, "wouldn't the governor be —— cross if he was 'ere."

Holt was the foulest-mouthed man, and in his first production, *Black-Ey'd Susan*, would exhort the Susan in his arms to more pathos, in *sotto voce* oaths and horrible epithets. He once undertook to appeal to the imagination of a child actress who did not pick up her words. Kneeling by her side, he gave her the sentences with proper emphasis, alternating the words with mumbled obscenities and blasphemy. The child's memory was quickened by terror—and what she said on the stage at night shall not be set down, even with discreet stars.

New Babylon was set out as the unaided work of Paul Meritt, a person of awful obesity and a treble voice. The first time I met him he was sitting on the press-copy letter-book, containing the day's correspondence, written in his small, neat hand. He was a voluminous writer, in a small, round hand, of most quarrelsome letters, had been a clerk or a salesman at Tapling's carpet warehouse—Metzger by name. But he developed a facility for writing melodrama. There was a furious controversy as to the origin of *New Babylon*, which was claimed by an American author, by name George Fawcett Reeve. Anyway, it was a huge success. Produced on 13th

February 1879, it ran till June, 1880, when the theatre was burned down, but for many years it profitably toured the provinces. Wilmot, the dominant partner, had three theatres burned down ere it occurred to him that insurance is a wise provision. He insured heavily, and never a spark of fire again.

Let the official advertisement of *New Babylon* describe it: “*New Babylon*, by Paul Meritt, is the talk of London! Stalls filled nightly by the élite of London; and the theatre crowded in every part. The most attractive drama ever written. Suits all classes. The Collision on the Atlantic. Tattersalls, with its sales of horses. Cremorne, with its dancing platform and Ten Thousand Lights. Goodwood, on the Grand Race Day. The Thames Embankment, with its electric Witness; and Seven Dials by night are pictures that must attract.

In *New Babylon* appeared a beautiful woman, whose mass of fair hair was a town’s talk, Caroline Hill. She was the original Mirza in Gilbert’s *Palace of Truth*, and the original Cynesca in *Pygmalion and Galatea*. She is still an eager and sympathetic playgoer.

New Babylon undoubtedly suggested *The World* to Augustus Harris. This was the first of autumn dramas. It was announced as the work of Paul Meritt, Henry Pettitt and Augustus Harris, who also acted in it. It has often been alleged against him that he posed as an author in greed to fees, and acted to qualify for the Drury Lane Fund. True, he reaped both advantages; but of my knowledge I declare that his rare knowledge of stagecraft, his quick eye for a

topical situation, his teeming ideas were invaluable to his collaborators ; and, on my honour, that I have seen worse actors.

I think realism reached its height at Drury Lane when "Pompadour Jim" Corbett, the prize-fighter, enacted, in the intervals of receiving duchesses in his dressing-room, a play entitled *Gentleman Jack*. There was a tremendous scene at the Orleans Club, a fight in progress. It was whispered around Drury Lane that the back door would be open, and that the noble sportsmen of the neighbourhood would be allowed to form an actual, vital audience of the fight. Not in my memory of the stage have I seen such a crowd ! The experiment was not adventured twice. Next night the "boys" arrived again in their thousands, only to be beaten back by the police.

CHAPTER XVIII

“THE LIGHTS OF LONDON”

A First Meeting with Sims—Henry Pettitt—Genesis of *The Lights of London*—Wilson Barrett's Early Struggles in London—A General Rejection—Zola diluted at Aldgate Pump—Barrett's Downfall and Uprising

NEARLY thirty years ago I dined with Henry Pettitt. We sat till a late hour; and then he jumped up, crying impulsively: “Let's go over to George Sims.” I had not met Dagonet in the flesh. “All the more reason you should call,” said Pettitt. We got a hansom, and drove to Regent's Park. Pettitt flung pebbles at the study window till Sims appeared at the front door, comfortably slippered, a short clay pipe in his mouth. We sat by the fire, drinking gin and water, and talking of crime, until daylight. Sims had just secured a treasure—a *carte de visite*, as the little photographs of those days were called, of a woman murdered by the Ripper in Whitechapel, the quarters stitched together, the stitches picked out in red ink!

Pettitt is long dead. An illness wrongly diagnosed, a nervous system reduced by the delusion that his earning power had left him, though he left upwards of £40,000, brought him to an early grave. We talked of it the other day, Sims and I, but more

of *The Lights of London*, for the mail had just brought in a tempting offer from America in respect of the cinema rights. The dramatic rights are valuable still.

Yet the play was nearly sold outright for a song. We fetched out the original manuscript, all in the author's then quite legible writing, with hardly an erasure or a correction. The play was produced almost literally as it was written, with the notable exception that the last scene was developed into the famous spectacle of the Borough on Saturday night—a realisation of a well-known picture by Fred Barnard. It is often said that *The Lights of London* was adapted from an earlier novel. Not so. Despairing of its production, Sims turned his play into a novel, which appeared in a weekly paper he edited, called *One and All*. Well do I remember the sandwich-men marching through the streets advertising its advent, one letter of the title on the breast of each man, so that you had to stand at the salute, so to speak, while they marched past, to spell the legend. A feature of *One and All* was a novel, of which each chapter recorded an event of the week. Perhaps the strain on the writer was too great, for the paper had but a short life.

But when Sims's story *Rogues and Vagabonds* came to be reconsidered for the stage it was found that it had accumulated material for a second play, and that was *The Romany Rye*. If *The Lights of London* was adapted from anything, it was adapted from Sims's well-known song, suggested from the overheard talk of a tramp and his wife :

“The way was long and dreary,
 But gallantly they strode,
 A country lad and lassie,
 Along the heavy road ;
 The night was dark and stormy,
 But blithe of heart were they,
 For shining in the distance
 The Lights of London lay.
 O gleaming Lights of London,
 That gem the city’s crown,
 What fortunes lie within you,
 O lights of London town.”

While *The Lights of London* waited its fate Sims’s other plays were fortunate. Not, perhaps, *A Hundred Years Old*, written for a well-known actor, produced at a “benefit,” and never paid for. But certainly *Crutch and Toothpick*, a satire on the *jeunesse dorée* of the day, translated from the French to the order of Charles Wyndham. Sims interviewed the then young actor-manager in his bedroom, at a little hotel off the Strand, run by the first Mrs, eventually Lady, Wyndham. The room was full of portmanteaux, and the portmanteaux were bursting with manuscripts. But *Crutch and Toothpick* did not join them, though Wyndham drove a hard bargain—twenty pounds down and one pound per performance till £150 should have paid full satisfaction for all rights!

Business in connection with *Crutch and Toothpick* took Mr Sims to Leeds. There he met Wilson Barrett, then a provincial actor-manager—in a word, the husband in fact and in status of Miss Heath, a favourite actress of the day. Barrett confided his

designs on London management to the young dramatist, who in turn insinuated his manuscript, not remarking that it had been refused by the Gattis for the Adelphi; by Gooch for the Princess's; by Harris for Drury Lane—in fact, by every manager in town. Dear old George Spencer Edwards, the original "Carados," advised Sims as a last resort to take it to Morris Abrahams of the Pavilion Theatre, "who would always go to fifty for a good thing." Fortunately for Sims this good thing never got that way.

From the supper at Leeds to the first night of *The Lights of London* at the Princess's on 10th September 1881 "the way was long and dreary." Barrett's first season in London was at the Court Theatre, where Forbes Robertson played Romeo to the Juliet of Modjeska—but the talk of the town was the young lessee's Mercutio.

With a fortune made out of *Drink*, Gooch rebuilt the Princess's Theatre, after a disastrous fire. He proceeded from failure to failure. Barrett, with the poet Wills's *Juana*, with *Fernande*, and a revival of *The Old Love and the New* had not done much better; and was at the end of his tether. But he had secured a lease of the Princess's and he remembered Sims's enthusiastic description of *The Lights of London*. They met; they were in agreement about the play. "And the terms?" said Sims. "I was frightfully hard up," he confessed to me. "A clerkship in the city, casual journalism, a few commissions to polish up old burlesques for the theatres, and expensive habits made my case such that a few hundreds ready would have induced me to part with

all my rights in the play gladly. But it was not convenient to Barrett to find the few hundreds. He offered instead to pay liberally by results—and the results of the first fortnight exceeded my wildest hopes in the way of a lump sum. The results to date? Ah!”

Mr Sims retains this much of his early training in the city: he is a punctilious account-keeper. Seventy-five little black books contain each the financial history of a play, from week to week, at home and abroad. Of *The Lights of London* he reveals no more than this: “The year before the production my income was £1400; the year after, it was £14,000.”

Critical opinion of *The Lights of London* was mixed. One well-known critic said it was Zola diluted at Aldgate Pump. Edmund Yates, of *The World*, sent Sims a particularly vicious notice, anonymous, with the endorsement: “The writer of this is ——. I give you the name because I have always found it useful to know my enemies.” But the majority of the critics saw a new force in melodrama—the stuff then popular was very rank, and mostly in the form of crude, often acknowledged, adaptation from the French. They saw the Dickens touch in Sims’s vivid character studies, and in his homely humour, his sympathy with the poor, his gripping story. At the Princess’s two hundred and twenty-eight performances were placed to the record of *The Lights of London*. It travelled the world over, and has never ceased. When the war broke out it was a current attraction in Swedish, at Stockholm.

Chiefly, in scanning the cast of *The Lights of London*, one sees the suggestion of sadness. E. S. Willard, an actor already of reputation and experience, made his first really remarkable success as Clifford Armytage, and seemed destined for a career of stage villainy, till his Cyrus Blenkarn, in *The Middleman*, sped him on another path, and to world fame. A reserved and friendless man always, his engrossing recreation was racing. But the melancholy of his disposition led to madness and death. Dead too is the Shakespeare Jarvis, Barrett's brother George, a rich and rare comedian whose qualities we see somewhat in his son to-day. Miss Eastlake, who graduated in Criterion Comedy to become a heroine of melodrama, quarrelled with her long-time manager, lost the figure of romance and disappeared from public view. When in 1911 her death, at the age of fifty-five, was announced, she was almost forgotten. She had, I believe, been running a suburban boarding-house in the meantime.

Barrett's career at the Princess's was meteoric. He made vast sums of money; nor did he dissipate them wholly, as some would have you believe, on his ambitious failures. At any rate, he lost his lease. For years he was a wanderer on the face of the earth, with huge debts in London, which he vainly sought to reduce by remittances from his surplus receipts. In 1896 he returned with that egregious play, *The Sign of the Cross*. Nonconformity and neuroticism made it so popular that, in the shortest space of time, he paid his debts, and when, at fifty-seven, he died, he left £30,000.

CHAPTER XIX

“THE SILVER KING”

The Most Famous Melodrama of Modern Times—A Run of a Year—
The last Silver King—H. B. Irving—“Daddy” Herman—Willard’s
Spider—A Remarkable Death Roll—Matthew Arnold as a Critic

PRUDENT managers of theatres reckon on the probability of one failure in three productions and “make their book” accordingly. The gambling simile is not improper to the subject. In Sims’s novel, *Rogues and Vagabonds*, there was such a wealth of material that the surplus of *The Lights of London* was used for a second play, *The Romany Rye*, which did not please as its predecessor had done, though it was played one hundred and thirty-eight times at the Princess’s, and became a good provincial property. And then a wonderful thing happened. The critics, who had exhausted eulogy on *The Lights of London*, needed to lay in new stores for *The Silver King*, which was produced on 16th November 1882, and ran the better part of a year—two hundred and eighty-nine performances.

I think that in his heart Barrett loved the character of Wilfred Denver more than any other. Certainly he had an immense affection for the play. When hard times came, he mortgaged his share in it, as he needed to mortgage everything; but he never lost

the string, and I recall the note of satisfaction in his voice when he told me he had just recovered *The Silver King*.

Not a day has passed in all the meanwhile without a performance of the play; which has, during the past few months, been reconstructed for the cinema, and which I lately encountered on the twice-nightly programme of a popular music hall. This mutilation was, however, shortly agreed to be ineffectual. Its last revival at the West End was in 1914, when Harry Irving was induced by his successful appearance in a command performance, at His Majesty's Theatre, for the benefit of King George's Pension Fund, of what was officially selected as "the most famous melodrama of modern times," to repeat it at the Strand Theatre.

A melancholy interest attaches to this note; for as I write comes news of Irving's death, within a few hours of the anniversary of his father's death. The famous actor meant that his two sons should follow professions remote from the theatre. H. B. Irving was called to the Bar, and occasionally got a brief. Laurence Irving spent a few years in the diplomatic service, and got an intimate knowledge of Russia, which he eventually employed on the stage. Irving was angry when both boys allied themselves with the theatre, and described their earlier efforts with sardonic humour. He displayed quite a little feeling toward Alexander, who gave H. B. Irving his first important employment. But he was reconciled in time, and proudly indicated Laurence Irving to a Lyceum audience as the actor-author of *Peter the*

Great. Both sons followed him to the grave with tragical rapidity.

H. B. Irving was uncannily like his father ; and played many of his parts, though to the parrot cry of imitation he was able to confront the statement that his opportunities of seeing his father in his more famous characters were few. Some characters he played in which he had never seen his father. A man of distinguished ability and character, he might have succeeded greatly elsewhere than on the stage, where he was certainly made to suffer for his parentage. "His father's mantle fell beside him," said an unkind wit.

But to my story of *The Silver King*. It differed from most masterpieces in that it was written to commission. No sapient manager declined it, because none had the opportunity of doing so. It is strange that Mr Henry Arthur Jones, the main contributor to the construction of the play, admits no *flair* for melodrama. If he were asked to indicate his best play, he would probably select *Michael and his Lost Angel*. If he were asked of which he were most proud, he would probably point to *The Tempter*. But the subtlety of comedy has the greatest fascination for him. *The Silver King* is unique among his seventy plays.

When this son of a Buckinghamshire yeoman first turned to literature as an escape from rather sordid commerce, he toiled three years on a novel, which was rejected. He wrote a few one-act plays, and so impressed Barrett with one that the actor suggested he should try his hand at a melodrama, but prudently

stipulated for the association of his stage manager, Henry Herman, with the novice. This led to an eventual quarrel as to the exact contributions of the collaborators, which supplied the public with a nine days' wonder, and a particularly acrimonious correspondence. Looking backward from his pinnacle of success, across the years, Mr Jones very greatly regrets the incident; but avers that the dialogue and characterisation of the play were wholly his, while some of the most striking incidents were Herman's. The two men met and talked, but got no further than a conventional murder. Then to Mr Jones came the memory of a story in *Good Words* of a man who believed that he had committed a murder but, in fact, was not guilty of worse than the immoral intent. Herman brought in the data of a murder, then the topic of newspaper discussion. Herman also suggested the burglary in evening dress. After such talks in town, Jones would retire to his Hampton Hill cottage, and return with sheets of manuscript, in a neat clerical handwriting, for submission to Barrett, whose immense, acute and technical knowledge of stagecraft was, of course, invaluable. During the bitter controversy as to the shares of the parties in the composition of the play, this manuscript mysteriously disappeared. But the business training of Mr Jones had suggested a press copy—and, securely bound, it still exists, irrefutable testimony.

Herman was a strange, extravagant, large-hearted creature, who teemed with ideas, but certainly could not write. He sold his share in *The Silver King* to

a publishing firm, for a few hundreds. Before he became Herman, he was Darco; but few even of his intimate friends knew his real name. Tradition said that he had lost an eye fighting for the Confederates in the American War. He certainly fought; and as certainly he wore an artificial eye, with which he would play gruesome tricks for the entertainment of the circle. But it was the lancet of a tremulous surgeon that blinded him.

Willard's success as the Spider made him a public character. Bookmakers—he was quite the racing man—would warn each other in a jocular way to be careful of their customer; and a busman with extra sincerity apologised for giving him short change. In time Willard broke eagerly from the tradition of the heavy man—it is mostly the “heavy men” who develop into great actors. Phelps, old men tell me, was at his best as Sir Peter Teazle. Irving's early successes were in stage villainy of the deepest dye. By the way, it is not generally known, and the occasion is omitted from some biographies, slurred in others, that Irving made his first appearance at the Princess's Theatre on 24th September 1859. He was engaged for a term of years by the elder Augustus Harris, but entrusted first with so insignificant a part in *Ivy Hall*, one of the seventy odd plays of the otherwise blameless, erudite, judicial and sympathetic critic of *The Times*, John Oxenford, that he retired from the contract, angry and desperately disappointed.

What a completely lovable comedian has become a once apparently inveterate Adelphi villain—J. D.

Beveridge! Another, William Abingdon, could be quite debonair and engaging. The shackles clung more heavily to Charles Cartwright—one of the finest of actors, but, in later life, gloomy and saturnine in his art as in his life.

If the Spider made Willard's fortune, as an artist, Cyrus Blenkarn, another creature of Henry Arthur Jones's imagination, made his fame. Willard ranged the potteries, and "swotted" the literature of ceramic art. All admirable, all useful; great art may owe much to such industry; but the spark that made the furnace glow was in the actor, the last chapter of whose life is one of the saddest in the history of the modern stage.

In the cast of the "command" performance, at His Majesty's Theatre, were four members of the original cast—Willard, John Beauchamp, H. de Solla and Murray Carson. Regretful reference was made to the fact that the three most important contributors to the success of *The Silver King*, at the onset, were dead—Barrett, his brother George, and Mary Eastlake. After an interval of five and twenty years it was not remarkable that death should have taken a tithe of the cast; but it is remarkable that within so few years of this command performance, Tree, Alexander, H. B. Irving, Murray Carson, Harry Paulton, Weedon Grossmith, Florence Haydon, William Abingdon, Harold Chapin, and Edward Sass should have passed away!

A sequel to the success of *The Silver King* was the appearance of Matthew Arnold as a dramatic critic. Shall we say the reappearance; for to *The*

Nineteenth Century for August, 1879, he contributed an article on "The French Play in London," apropos the visit of the Comédie Française to the Gaiety. It was included in *Irish Essays, and Others*.

An ingenious letter from Mr Jones brought Arnold to the Princess's—admittedly after a long interval. He remembered Macready there, "a powerful actor in great pieces," but ill supported by his company: his circumstances dingy, his audience poor and uninteresting. Arnold was surprised to find the theatre gay, well filled, the audience lively, intelligent and interested. He was surprised to find that while Barrett's ability naturally distinguished him, his support was excellent.

Of *The Silver King* he wrote: "It is not Shakespeare; it is melodrama. . . . The essential difference between melodrama and poetic drama is, that the one relies for its main effect upon an inner drama of thought and passion, the other upon an outer drama of (as the phrase is) sensational incidents. *The Silver King* relies for its main effect upon an outer drama of sensational incidents, and so far is clearly melodrama. . . . In general, in drama of this kind, the diction and sentiments, like the incidents, are extravagant, impossible, transpontine; here they are not. This is a very great merit; a very great advantage. . . . In general, throughout the piece, the diction and sentiments are natural; they have sobriety and propriety. They are literature. It is an excellent and hopeful sign."

Again, "An old Playgoer" contributed to *The Pall Mall Gazette* his impressions of *Impulse*, adapted from

La Maison du Mari, by B. C. Stephenson. Only the singularly attractive, sympathetic and popular personalities of the Kendals made it tolerable to him. "French pieces," he said, "have their reason for existing in the state of society which they reflect and interpret. . . . But, *Impulse*, what life does it render? That fraction of our society for which the French play and novel are a rendering of its own life is so small as to be quite unimportant. This is proved, indeed, by the transformation which the French play undergoes before the English playwright can present it to the charming faces, figures and toilettes of our boxes and stalls. Virtue has to triumph; the *amant frivole* has to come to grief. Ingenious playwright! Ingenious society! Know this, as to your *amant*, as to your Victor de Riel. Where he exists, where he is an institution, matters may well enough pass as they pass in the genuine French play. . . . Where he is an exotic, nothing can make him tolerable; defeated or triumphant, he equally makes the piece of which he is the centre unpleasant, makes it ridiculous."

Of *Much Ado about Nothing*, at the Lyceum, Arnold wrote that "Miss Terry is sometimes restless and over-excited, but she has a spiritual vivacity which is charming. Mr Irving has faults which have often been pointed out, but he has, as an actor, a merit which redeems them all, and which is the secret of his success: the merit of delicacy and distinction. In some of his parts he shows himself capable also of intense and powerful passion. But twenty other actors are to be found who have a passion as intense

and powerful as his, for one other actor who has his merit of delicacy and distinction."

Mr Henry Elliott, who collated Arnold's criticisms for *The Theatre*, thinks this is all; but I seem to remember "*Hamlet Once More*" apropos Barrett's revival.

CHAPTER XX

NEW LAMPS FOR OLD

Belphegor the Mountebank—Variations on *Faust*—Oscar Wilde on the Stage—*Peg o' My Heart's* History—*The Forty Thieves*—*Chu Chin Chow's* Record Run.

I LOVE that story of the exuberant Parisian students who, in the small hours of one morning, beat up Galland, the distinguished Orientalist, to whom we owe the discovery of *The Arabian Nights*, and when his night-capped head came through an upper window cried: "Oh, sir, will you not give us one more of the thousand-and-one tales you tell so well?" It is the eternal appeal to the dramatist! Who cares whence come his stories; who cares what their antiquity—if he tell them well? Your ultra-modern playwright but rings the thousand-and-first change on the story of Adam and Eve and the serpent.

"Old wine to drink, old wood to burn, old books to read, and old friends to converse with" has an expansive and infinite application to the stage. Gilbert once wrote an article remarking on the fact that, outside a dozen classics, including some plays of Shakespeare, not a dozen of the seventeenth and eighteenth century plays retained an acting value, or were within the knowledge of the average reader. He might shorten his list now, for *The Good-Natur'd Man*, *The Road to Ruin*, *The Country Girl*, *Wild*

Oats and *The Clandestine Marriage* have all been consigned to limbo, too. Of course, in the meanwhile, half-a-dozen societies have come into existence to repair our ignorance. We confront their efforts with a moderate gratitude.

But the old stuff beneath the style—the old stories—how we love them still. They are so few ! The greater wisdom of the dramatist seems to be to address himself doggedly to ingenious mutations, and let the critics discover—and cynically remark upon—their spring. Avowed revisions of old favourites are apt to be damned ere they are half done. Mr Robert Loraine’s obsession is a revival of *Belphegor* ; or, not a revival, but a complete metragobolisation of the old play into a modern drama. *Belphegor* has a curious fascination for the old actor—I doubt not that Mr Loraine’s father played it ; the son is *bon chien de chasse*. To the modern generation the play is unknown. Barrett, to be sure, had Mr Loraine’s notion, but his *Acrobat* had a short life at the Olympic in 1891, and is quite forgotten.

Belphegor ! Turn to your reference books, and you will come up against a Moabitish god, of a bad character—so quaint are the resorts of circus folk in search of striking nomenclature. Our Belphegor was a pathetic acrobat, with a faithless wife and a forlorn child. He was brought into being for Lemaître in a French play called *Paillasse* ; and first imported to the Adelphi by Ben Webster. The part was favoured in English, or such English as he spoke, by Fechter. Henry Neville, too, appeared as

Belphegor with success. But the association still vivid in the memory of the old playgoer is with Charles Dillon, an immense favourite in the sixties, and a little later. He played Richard with a flamboyant moustache, of natural growth, and a goatee, as Wilford Morgan played Sir Harry Bumper (with song). In his brave days Dillon was "supported" by Henry Irving, whom he is said to have insolently accosted in the Strand, during the first run of *Hamlet*, with: "And are you doing anything now, young fellow?" Dillon is probably described with perfect justice by Westland Marston as "an actor of great emotional gifts, but very deficient in intellectual ones." Such actors are not unknown now.

George Alexander had a great desire to play another Fechter-Neville part, Henri de Lagardere, in *The Duke's Motto*; and I believe Huntly McCarthy prepared him the version eventually used by Lewis Waller.

Faust has enjoyed an extraordinary popularity with the translator—the word, you know, has a technical meaning with the cobbler and polisher of old boots. I prefer it to the finer phrase of Mr Thomas Shadwell, or of Nahum Tate, the psalmist who "re-strung the rough gems" of the barbarian Shakespeare into eighteenth-century revues. Gilbert fashioned a prize-poem kind of play from Goethe, as *Gretchen*, in which, on tour, Miss Fortescue, blushing with the *réclame* of a £10,000 breach of promise case against young Lord Garmoyle, played Marguerite, and Edmund Leathes was a suave, well-covered fiend. Unfortunate Herman Merivale made

a drawing-room drama of *Faust*, which he called *The Cynic*, with Herman Vezin as the devil in a dress coat. It had a trial at Manchester, and a short run at the Globe in 1882. To Harry Paulton, *Pygmalion and Galatea* suggested *Niobe: all Tears*—which managed five hundred and fifty performances at the Strand, with the statuesque Beatrice Lamb as the modern model of a modern sculptor—and to Frederick Anstey, *The Tinted Venus*.

To Sir Squire Bancroft we owe *The Colonel*, just as we owed the remarkably successful revival of *Diplomacy*. He has a large store of old manuscripts and copyrights, and an immense belief in their vitality. To Burnand he repaired with Morris Barnett's *Serious Family*, and its original *Le Mari à la Campagne*. The idea was to substitute some new weakness of society for the religious mania satirised in the earlier plays. London had just, as to one half, lost its head over "æstheticism." As to the other half, it was disgusted. Du Maurier was making great capital in *Punch* out of Maudle and Postlethwaite. Oscar Wilde was in the flower—the lily, not yet the green carnation—of his youth. Gilbert was excogitating *Patience*. Bancroft was in immediate agreement with Burnand that here was the scheme. But the play, read to the Haymarket company, was received with something like contempt; and in the event, Burnand was told that he might do what he pleased with it. He took it to Edgar Bruce, who had just secured the Prince of Wales Theatre. Bruce liked the play; and in a flash of inspiration saw Coghlan in the part—hand-

some, fascinating, selfish, spendthrift Charles Coghlan, whose death was a mystery, and whose body was washed up on the Pacific shore. Coghlan was, with difficulty, persuaded to accept the part, and proved troublesome at the rehearsals, during which the play was improved a good deal. Tree made almost his first popular success as Lambert Streyke, frankly, Oscar Wilde, who was destined to be the prey of many a dramatist—ere he gave them a lesson in their own craft. *The Colonel* was received with enthusiasm. It ran a year. Its life was prolonged in the provinces with Bruce himself, then Charles Collette as Colonel Woottweell W. Woodd—spell out the name, and you will catch a fine Victorian stage trick of humour. Bruce made a fortune, out of which he built the Prince's Theatre. Its name was changed to the Prince of Wales's when the end of the Tottenham Court Road house permitted. It was not very fortunate at the outset, and Bruce retired, to live peacefully by the Thames side, on a profit rental of £1200 a year. This has increased to thousands for his daughter.

I do not recall that Hartley Manners ever officially acknowledged his indebtedness to Blackstone's *Rough Diamond* for *Peg o' my Heart*, but it was there all right.

To George Dance, I think, it occurred to turn the familiar pantomime stories into modern drama, and the partners in his successes branched out into three of the most important managements of the day. *The Lady Slavey* was sheer *Cinderella*. It founded the fortunes of Greet and Engelbach, expanded by

The Sign of the Cross. At the old Strand Theatre *A Chinese Honeymoon* just exceeded a thousand performances. It was an ingenious attempt to get the glamour of *Aladdin* in musical comedy. In this case, Frank Curzon was established. At the Duke of York's Theatre *The Gay Parisian*, brought Edward Laurillard, of Grossmith and Laurillard, into prominence. It was enlarged from a farcical sketch which Dance had sold to the Majilton troupe entitled *The New Barmaid*. They could do nothing with it and he bought it back for a song. *The Gay Parisian* owed much to an imported song, *Sister Mary Jane's Top Note*, sung by that queer little genius, Louie Freear. She had a voice that suggested grand opera, and a body that indicated her to Tree as an ideal Puck—which she was not. In comic characters of the “slavey” type she was wonderful, and commanded a then huge salary. “Sit tight, hold tight, Mary's going to sing,” immediately arrested the audience. But Louie Freear's star set as suddenly as it rose.

It is strange that the story of *The Forty Thieves* should never have occurred to a writer of melodrama. A “musical romance,” by George Coleman the younger, produced at Drury Lane in 1806, proves upon investigation to have been quite on the lighter side. It had a long run for those days, thanks mainly to the contribution of Michael Kelly—Sheridan's “composer of wines and importer of music.” It was sumptuously attired. Bannister played Ali Baba. Meanwhile there have been burlesques and pantomimes innumerable based on *The Forty Thieves*. A burlesque written by the members of the Savage

Club was performed at the Lyceum in 1860 for the benefit of stricken members, with H. J. Byron as Ali Baba, Lionel Brough as Ganem, Frank Talfourd as Cogia, Robert Brough as Morgiana, Andrew Halliday as Cassim, William Brough as Hassarac, and John Hollingshead as Menza. The prologue by Planche was "so brilliant, and so admirably delivered by Leicester Buckingham that it nearly obtained the extraordinary honour of an encore."

Most of the burlesque writers tried their hands on *The Forty Thieves*. There was, at the Strand, in the sixties, Byron's *Ali Baba, or The Thirty-nine Thieves* (in accordance with the author's habit of taking one off!). Herein, Miss Ada Swanborough, as Abdallah, was a swell-mobsman :

" . . . vulgar violence is on the wane,
Therefore become more polished in your style,
And, like King Richard, murder while you smile.
I go into society, and none
Know I'm a thief, or could conceive me one.
I start new companies, obtain their pelf,
And, after starting them, I start myself ;
Swindle the widow, the poor orphan do,
And then myself become an off-un too."

George Honey was Abdallah's *vis-à-vis* as Hassarac ; the Morgiana Miss Charlotte Saunders, in her youth a popular favourite in burlesque ; during the last years of her long life the incomparable "old woman" of the Beatrice Company.

Reece wrote two burlesques of *The Forty Thieves* for the Gaiety. The second, done in 1880, began the new era of burlesque. It was in three acts, and

employed the famous quartet at its best—Terry as Ali Baba, Nellie Farren as Ganem, Royce as Hassarac, and Kate Vaughan as Morgiana.

Chu Chin Chow was begun as a pantomime—it has become an institution! It was lucky indeed for Oscar Asche that his scheme, propounded to Mr J. B. Mulholland for a somewhat different “Christmas Annual,” giving a dramatic significance to *The Forty Thieves*, got no further than a sympathetic talk, and a suggestion of schemes. Some time later, while Mr Asche was on tour, he struck a dull week in Manchester, and as an alternative to impossible golf took up his pen and wrote. The earlier scenes of *Chu Chin Chow*, in the form of a romantic drama, came so naturally that he summoned a stenographer, and worked day and night till his task was completed.

So far as the manuscript was concerned! For the managers to whom it was submitted saw nothing in it. In fact, two of the most astute turned it down. *Chu Chin Chow* owes its eventual production to Henry Dana, who had been left in charge of His Majesty’s during Tree’s absence in America—long continued, and destined to end in tragedy. Mr Dana was deeply impressed by the piece, and willing that it should be accorded a home at His Majesty’s. More, he strongly advised his absent chief to provide a moiety of the capital necessary for the venture. Tree did not like the idea at all, but a reluctant authority to Dana to do what he thought best in the matter was at length secured, and the play was produced.

Its cost sheet is of extreme interest, and compares

remarkably with the figures to which many insane speculators in scenic effect commit themselves. There is a workmanlike injunction: "It is better to measure twice than to cut once." The original outlay on the material of *Chu Chin Chow*, the figure put to capital account ere the curtain rose on the first performance, was little more than £5000, and this, it will be noted by experts, includes many items that are apt to be shuffled to other accounts for the bewilderment of befooled backers. Here they are:

Scenery—Wages, material and paintings . . .	£1438	13	6
Properties—Wages, materials and purchases . . .	334	13	5
Costumes—Wages, materials and purchases . . .	1858	1	9
Electrics—Wages, materials	50	6	4
Rehearsals—Artists' salaries	116	9	6
„ Limelight and lighting	46	13	6
„ Orchestra	235	16	9

Chu Chin Chow thereafter represented an outlay of £200 on each performance—there have been eight, nine and even ten in a week. Its income, during the first three years of its run always exceeded £150,000—not to speak of such important tributories as music publishing rights, gramophone records, the eventual cinema, and provincial and American rights.

There is no doubt "Freddie" Norton did much to make the success of *Chu Chin Chow*; and he is very frank in his statement of what *Chu Chin Chow* did for him. An insurance clerk at Manchester, he came to London at twenty-four to study music. Six months later he was disposed to throw up his new career in despair—though he had a friend no less important than Paolo Tosti. He tried the opera

chorus and the music halls. He became, with his facility at the piano, and his aptitude at mimicry, one of the most popular figures in Bohemia. When Mr Courtice Pounds, who was in his youth the ideal *jeune premier* of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, and in later life a Shakespearean clown that Lamb might have loved, fell ill shortly after the production of *Chu Chin Chow*, Mr Norton slipped into the breach, and acquitted himself finely. He wrote the music for *Pinkie and the Fairies*, which made a little fortune—but not for Freddie Norton. It took twelve months of *Chu Chin Chow* to pay off the debts accumulated during twenty of struggle—but now!

CHAPTER XXI

HORSE-PLAY

Mazeppa—From Byron to Menken—The Original Exponent—Gomersal's Napoleon—Dickens and Astley's—The Life of the Circus—*Dick Turpin*—*Claude Duval*

So completely is *Mazeppa* identified with Adah Isaacs Menken in the popular imagination that the average reader will probably be surprised to learn the play was well known any time during thirty years before her arrival in this country, in 1864. Byron's poem was published in 1819. It was based upon a possibly apocryphal story in Voltaire's *History of Charles XII.*; and it was adapted to the stage in 1831, for Ducrow, by one of the accustomed hacks of the day, H. H. Milner, in whose behalf an interesting apologia was printed. Byron it admitted to be "a great and original genius; he has a depth of thought and a force of expression that are truly admirable. In aiming at too much conciseness he is often harsh and obscure, while his artificial pauses, his rapid and sometimes unnatural transitions give to his poetry an air of pedantry and affectation. . . . The mass of obscenity and profaneness which Lord Byron has bequeathed to posterity is now become a question between him and his Creator."

This impressive exercise in circus *réclame*—ninety-year-old, dear Charles B. Cochran of *The Courier*.—



MR. CARLITCH: THE ORIGINAL MAZEPPA

proceeds, “*Mazeppa* has found his way to the stage with the accompaniment of appropriate scenery, alternately savage and splendid; gorgeous processions, dresses and decorations; gallant knights and ladies fair; banquets, tournaments and real horses. The story has been considerably varied and amplified to bring these powerful auxiliaries into full play; and an imposing spectacle is the result.” That one can well believe. I have an ambition some day to tell the story of the amazing Ducrow—a century before his time in the idea, the technique and the imagination of the *metteur en scène*. The original *Mazeppa*, at the Royal Amphitheatre, Westminster, was Cartlich, who was with the real Richardson show, and to whom Richardson left a legacy, in recognition of the zeal with which his “bould voice” had been exercised in shouting outside the show. Gomersal was the King of Tartary—Gomersal who, *pace* Coquelin, Irving, and “Teddy” Mosedale, must go down in theatrical history as the Napoleon, *par excellence*, of the stage. You will find him immortalised in the delicious *Bon Gaultier Ballads*. Lord Castlereagh (in *The Midnight Vision*) is visited in his dreams by Napoleon, suddenly returned from St Helena, or from Elba. The Emperor, disappearing as suddenly as he appeared, leaves behind him a mysterious paper declaring, as he says, his new hiding-place.

“With trembling hands Lord Castlereagh undid the mystic scroll,
With glassy eyes essayed to read—for fear was in his soul;
What’s here? At Astley’s every night the play of Moscow’s fall.
Napoleon, for the thousandth night, by Mr Gomersal.”

Mr Herring, the Drolinsko, was the famous clown, Paul Herring.

It was Adah Isaacs Menken's distinction to be the first female Mazeppa. She set a fashion, followed by Amy Sheridan, a well-known burlesque actress of the seventies; and most recently, I think, by Maud Forrester, who proceeded to the distinction of riding as Godiva in the old style Coventry pageant. There was a cry of horror from the newspapers when Menken's appearance at Astley's, in 1864, was announced. But I have my doubts as to its sincerity, for E. T. Smith was a fine showman. One critic broke out in verse :

“Lady Godiva's far outdone,
And Peeping Tom's an arrant duffer;
Menken outstrips them both in one,
Astley's—now the Opera Buffer.”

Fashionable London soon swarmed down Westminster Bridge Road.

Menken died wretchedly in Paris, in 1868, on the fifth floor of a low lodging in the Rue de Bondy, opposite the stage door of the Porte St Martin. She had gone there, her career, as she was conscious, making for its inevitable end; the seeds of consumption deeply rooted. Her life story, with its mysteries, still possesses an extraordinary fascination for connoisseurs in fantastic femininity. I find nothing so mysterious. Her five—or was it seven—husbands, ranging from the American humorist to the Hebrew financier, whose name and faith she adopted, and both retained, for she was not of Jewish birth, to the prize-fighting “Benicia Boy,” John C.



ADA ISAACS MENKEN AS MAZEPPA

Heenan, surely sum up one phase in her psychology in a single word. She must have had extraordinary fascination, for among her ardent admirers were Dickens, Dumas, Swinburne, and pseudo-Parson Bellew. She drank heavily of champagne and brandy, and appeared at Astley's fewer times than the public knew, being carefully understudied. Controversy still breaks out from time to time as to whether or no she wrote the little volume of passionate poems that bears her name. Swinburne, almost with his last breath, swore that he did not write them, though some of them are nearly good enough for him, and some are bad enough for anybody.

I have been assured, on authority, that Kate Santley, whom I saw sunning herself on the front at Brighton the other day, was in the cast with Menken. Her name is not there; and Miss Santley, when appealed to, said her memory refused to carry her so far back. James Fernandez, who subsequently joined the company, died lately; and Ada Murray, often Menken's understudy. Mr Victor Cook, an erect veteran who spends hours in the saddle every day, well remembers Menken, at Astley's, chiefly as an inveterate cigarette smoker, an attendant following her everywhere with a tray to capture the discarded ends. Fred Ginnett, too, remembers Menken, whom his father took on tour. She rode a fine white horse with a flowing tail—it is a humorous fiction that the fiery, untamed steed was a superannuated bus horse that would not start until he heard two stamps on an imagined foot-board. Fred Ginnett has a more interesting memory. He has sat by the knee of his grandfather and heard

the old man describe Waterloo, of which he always maintained that an impartial referee would have awarded the victory to the French! Anyhow, he was taken prisoner and sent to England, where his skill with horses led him to the circus, to settle in England and found a famous family.

Next in popularity to *Mazeppa* came *Dick Turpin*, founded, of course, on Ainsworth's novel. There was an earlier *Rookwood* by George Dibdin Pitt, at the Victoria. The circus "standard edition" was by Milner, the author of *Mazeppa*, and was done at Astley's in 1836. Turpin, of course, never rode to York—if the feat can be attributed to anyone, it is to Charles II.'s protégé, Nick Nevison. In fact, if ever a brutal ruffian were idealised without a shadow of excuse, it is the butcher who preferred to steal his cattle, and became by turns a smuggler, house-breaker, highwayman and horse-thief, being hanged in the last-named capacity, and for no more romantic exploit. On the stage we have had *The King's Highway*; and Mr R. A. Roberts's wonderful one man play.

An immense favourite as Dick Turpin was Jim Holloway. A slender and refined-looking old gentleman, he lives in comfortable retirement in North London, surrounded by memorials of the profession that he loves, and trophies of world-wide travel, for it is one of the charms of the circus artist's life that each of the four corners of the earth is home to him. The first Holloway was a Shakespearean actor, in the days when the circus was of a disposition to invade the London stage. Drury Lane, the Olympic, the Lyceum, Covent Garden, the Alhambra have all in

turn been circuses. Over the bridge, at Astley's, they retaliated with big spectacular productions to which the elder Holloway was introduced, having meanwhile become an accomplished rider. It was his ambition to adapt every play of Shakespeare to the circus. He succeeded notably with *Macbeth*, but most of all with *Richard*, in which he achieved a run of a hundred and ten performances. Probably Kean could not have made so proud a boast.

Astley's was founded by a military veteran, to whom George III. accorded the privilege of employing his old charger in stage trickery. From this small beginning Astley made fortune on fortune. He was followed by Ducrow, a Belgian athlete; in turn by Batty. They all became rich. The Cookes had just appeared on the scene when James Holloway the first was building up his reputation. One of the younger Holloway's first memories is of the reappearance of Barry, the famous clown, who had long retired, and become a prosperous publican in the neighbourhood. He was tempted to put on his motley once more for a benefit; and the effort proved fatal. At any rate, Barry fell ill, and died. Little did young Holloway think that in the days to come he was himself to become "England's most famous clown." Wallet was Barry's great rival, and feeling ran very high between the men. Wallet first called himself a "Shakespearean" jester, abandoning the conventional clown dress for one of gay satin, and wearing cap and bells. He, too, played Turpin, with a specially written poem addressed to the dead Black Bess. When Batty let his circus to William Cooke he kept a jealous eye on

the performance, and especially on the rent, though Cooke was a well-to-do man and a fastidious manager. Batty came down in a great state, having heard that a dyed Black Bess was in use. When the scandal was disproved, he apologised with "I ought never to have believed it of you, William."

Between his childhood at Astley's and his eventual prosperity, James Holloway had some rough times. At six he was apprenticed to a contortionist, who gave him as an additional responsibility the charge of a troupe of dogs, which occasionally had to be walked from town to town. The active cruelty of this wretch was not so distressing to the poor child as habitual starvation was. Twice the little artist was restored to his parents, and still they were constrained to return him to a calling which, in spite of every hardship, has been his life's love, and in which his children and grandchildren have prospered too.

Astley's may be said to have instituted the *matinée*. "I think, William," said old John Oxenford, of *The Times*, to Mr Cooke, "that afternoon performances will lower the place to the standard of a penny gaff, and I'm going to attack them"—which he did, vigorously.

Dickens was a great patron of Astley's; and often tendered criticism and advice to the elder Cooke, who reciprocated the friendship, and paid a visit to Tavistock Place, to advise on a stage for private theatricals. He arrived, as the Life tells us, "in an open phaeton drawn by two white ponies, with black dots all over them, evidently stencilled, who came in at the gate with a little jolt and a rattle,

exactly as they come into the ring, and went round and round the centre bed of the front court, apparently looking for the clown. A multitude of boys, who felt them to be no common ponies, rushed up in a breathless state—twined themselves like ivy about the railings, and were only deterred from storming the enclosure by the glare of the Inimitable's eye. Some of the boys had evidently followed from Astley's."

Few experiences are more interesting to the lover of London and of letters than the leaves of Dickens memories that flutter unexpectedly to his feet. I was conducting a distinguished American actor on a tour of London, on one of the last of the horse buses, and in Holborn indicated here and there a memorial. The driver turned to confess that he was Dickens's regularly accustomed cabman at Rochester. "A very generous gentleman," was all that he recalled. A veteran who but lately retired from the post of night porter at the Temple was Dickens's office boy at *All the Year Round*. The great man never spoke to him, "but when he arrived on his regular visit to approve the issue, my first order was 'Run for the ice, William.' It was to cool the brandy and water he drank at lunch. I remember seeing him in the Strand once, with Mr Disraeli. They were both laughing at caricatures of themselves in a shop window. I remember they wore the first white 'billy-cock' hats I had ever seen."

Widdicomb was the Sir Ranalph Rookwood, Cartlich the Luke Rookwood, a Mr W. Elliott the Dick Turpin, Mrs Pope, a great favourite at Astley's, the Sybil, and Miss Goward (can this have been Mrs

Keeley?) the Dolly Gudgeon, in the first *Dick Turpin*. To this day *Dick Turpin* is a sure card for any circus to play. *Claude Duval* comes in a bad second. *Mazeppa* is forgotten.

Claude Duval provides the dramatist with much interesting material—though I doubt if there is dependable authority for that pretty incident, depicted by Frith, of the coranto danced on the Heath. Claude figures in Ainsworth's *Talbot Harland*, and quickly found his way to the stages of the City of London Theatre and the Marylebone, by the hands of T. P. Taylor and Moncrieff. Burnand made the "Highwayman for the Ladies" the subject of a burlesque, done at the Royalty, with Miss Patty Oliver, Miss Kate Bishop, Miss Charlotte Saunders, Miss Nellie Bromley and Danvers in the cast. Solomon and Stephens wrote a Duval opera; and not very long ago he had an ample representative in Arthur Bouchier, at His Majesty's, in Mr Justin Huntly McCarthy's *Stand and Deliver*. For years *Claude Duval* was frequently played in Ginnett's circus.

For at least a century the highwayman had a definite, and not a despised, position in English society. The three names which still appeal to the imagination of the merely casual reader of criminal record were not the fittest to survive—those of Turpin, of Jack Sheppard and of Claude Duval—or Du Vall—who perhaps comes nearest the confines of romance. There was a real gentleman highwayman, Maclean, who is said but once to have fired a shot in anger. His bullet went through the hat

of Horace Walpole, to whom he indited a profuse and polite apology. But the most interesting pursuers of the high toby have left no more than a spur to the imagination. It is certain that many a gallant gentleman, his fortune broken, we are encouraged to believe, in the service of King Charles, but just as often, one suspects, by gaming and other passions, took to the road and levied, without murderous violence, a toll upon richer folk, maintaining the while his place in the clubs, on the country-side and even at Court.

To this class Claude Duval hardly belongs, though Mr Justin Huntly McCarthy can cite authority for making him a fascinating creature, with no conspicuously brutal act to his name. He came of Norman peasantry. Domfort, the place of his birth, had the name of breeding rascals. Its priest was cited to the Archiepiscopal Court for refusing to baptize any infant unless he should at the same time receive a burial fee. He protested that otherwise he could not live, for he was rarely called upon to bury a parishioner, their habit being to get themselves hanged at Rouen. Claude Duval pursued a vagabond course to Paris, and in time got to England as the valet or footman of the Duke of Richmond—not, of course, Madame Carwell's offspring, but the last duke of the earlier creation, who returned to England with Charles at the time of the Restoration, and whose title was revived not long after his death, according to that cynical King's deft fashion of dukedoms. It is conceivable that Charles had some knowledge of Duval. He certainly interested him-

self in the welfare of the knights of the road, to the extent of warning them not to expect habitual escape from the gallows.

Duval reached these shores in 1660, being then but seventeen; but his not unsympathetic biographer—said to be William Pope, whose quaint and extra-moral story is preserved in the *Harleian Miscellany*—declares that “his natural inclination to vice soon made him an extraordinary proficient in gaming and drunkenness, by which ill-courses taking, he soon fell into want of money to maintain his irregularities, so addicting himself to padding (slang of the time for highway robbery) he quickly became so famous that in a proclamation for the taking several notorious highwaymen, he had the honour to be named first.

“His robberies were many, among which we must take notice how he with his squadron overtakes a coach which they had set overnight, having intelligence of a booty of £400 on it. In the coach was a knight, his lady and a serving maid, who perceiving five horsemen making up to them presently imagined that they were beset, and they were confirmed in this apprehension by seeing them whisper to one another, and ride backwards. The lady, to show she was not afraid, takes a flageolet out of her pocket and plays. Duvall takes the hint, plays also, and in this posture he rides up to the coach side. ‘Sir,’ says he to the knight in the coach, ‘your lady plays excellently, and I do not doubt but that she dances as well. Will you please to walk out of the coach and let me have the honour to dance one courante with her, on the heath?’ ‘Sir,’ said

the knight on the coach, 'I dare not deny anything to one of your quality and good mien. You seem a gentleman, and your request is very reasonable'; which said, the footman opens the boot, out comes the knight, Duvall leaps lightly from his horse and hands the lady out of the coach.

"They danced; and here it was that Duvall performed marvels, the best masters in London except those that are French not being able to show such footing as he did in his great French riding boots. The dancing being over, he waits on the lady to her coach. As the knight was going in Duvall said to him, 'Sir, you have forgot to pay for the music.' 'No, I have not,' said the knight, and putting his hand under the seat of the coach pulls out £100 in a bag and delivers it to him, which Duvall took with a very good grace, and courteously answered, 'Sir, you are liberal and shall have no cause to repent your being so. This liberality of yours shall excuse you the other three hundred,' and giving him the word that, if he met with any more of the crew he might pass undisturbed, he civilly takes his leave of him."

Some of Duval's exploits set forth by Pope seem to have been prompted by a mad kind of humour. But they were not destined to continue. Twenty-seven saw him at Tyburn, in spite of the fact that many noble dames sought to get him pardoned. Stupid with drink, he was captured at an inn in Chandos Street. "Well it was for the bailiff and his men that he was drunk, otherwise they had tasted of his prowess, for he had in his pocket three

pistols, one whereof would shoot twice, and by his side an excellent sword, which managed by such a hand and heart must, without doubt, have done wonders. Nay, I have heard it attested by those that knew how good a marksman he was, and his excellent way of fencing, that, had he been sober, it was impossible he could have killed less than ten.

“There was a great company of ladies and those not of the meanest degree that visited him in prison, interceded for his pardon and accompanied him to the gallows; a catalogue of whose names I have by me, nay, even of those who, when they visited him, durst not pull off their vizards, for fear of showing their eyes swollen and their cheeks blubbered with tears.”

From Tyburn the body of the highwayman was borne in a great procession to the Tangier Tavern in Covent Garden. Here it lay in state. Wax tapers to the number of eight burned in the chamber, which was hung with black. The bier, on which scutcheons were displayed, was guarded by eight tall gentlemen in long black cloaks. And the stream of weeping women, from St James's to St Giles's, continued until a judge's order stopped the scandal. In Covent Garden church you may read the epilogue:

“Here lyes Du Vall: Reader, if male thou art,
Look to thy purse; if female to thy heart.
Much havoc hath he made of both; for all
Men he made stand, and women he made fall,
The second conqueror of the Norman race.
Knights to his arms did yield, and ladies to his face,
Old Tyburn's glory, England's illustrious thief,
Du Vall the ladies' joy, Du Vall the ladies' grief.”

Probably these lines are more dependable than the "last dying speech and confession" said to have been found on Duval's body, which he did not deliver. It professes penitence and the Catholic faith, and ends with a coarse exultation in his gallantries.

CHAPTER XXII

“THE MIRACLE”

How the Great Spectacle was evolved—Reinhardt—Statistics of the Production—Its Costs, its Expenses and its Receipts—Some Personalities—A Failure, then a Harmsworth Boom—And its Secret

STRANGE as it may seem, that most stupendous spectacle of modern times, *The Miracle*, had its inspiration from the circus. Mr Charles B. Cochran, born in his sedate, middle-class home, one would think with the scent of the sawdust in his nostrils, thought he saw the secret of the circus in the intimacy with its audience of the entertainment. There they sat on terms such as the Elizabethan playgoer enjoyed with Shakespeare and his inn-yard comrades—an integral part of the whole. Mr Cochran saw Kiralfy's *Constantinople* at Olympia, and was at once ambitious to outdo it, visualising a cathedral, whose “long-drawn aisle and fretted vault” should hide the common structure of the vast hall, the crowded congregation watching a pageant of Mediævalism.

He saw Reinhardt's production of *Œdipus Rex* at the Circus Schumann. Then and there for the first time he had actual experience of the audience in the circumstances of his younger imagination. The people seemed vital to the matter in hand—not so when the same thing was attempted at Covent Garden. The intimacy of the circus method was

changed into the detachment of the theatre. It was as though the audience sat in accustomed rows, and watched a performance on the stage! The atmosphere desired was not created.

But Reinhardt, Mr Cochran felt, was the man to change Olympia into a cathedral; to fill it with the mingled life of to-day and of old time. To Reinhardt then, located with his company in Budapest, Mr Cochran repaired, and unfolded his scheme.

Consternation is the only word for the effect of the plans of Olympia on the great *metteur en scène*. He declared that the project was infinitely beyond him. But Mr Cochran persisted, and, after an all-night sitting in a café, Reinhardt was induced to interest himself in the scheme. He gave the visitor from England an introduction to Dr Carl Volmoeller, his chief lieutenant, in Berlin, and after a long talk with him the scenario of *The Miracle* was roughly sketched. The Baruchs, theatrical costumiers and scenic artists, offered to find the necessary capital, but eventually their offer was declined.

On his return to London, Mr Cochran, holding an option on Olympia for the Christmas season, talked freely of his scheme with Mr Frederick Payne, managing director of the company owning Olympia; and Mr Payne asked that he and his confrères should have the opportunity of coming in, other than as landlords. So a subsidiary company was formed to find working expenses, in consideration of half the profits; the other half of the profits being allotted to Mr Payne and Mr Cochran. Roughly speaking,

£32,000 was spent on the production. It would cost £80,000 or more to-day, so very large has been the increase in the cost of all scenic material and theatrical labour.

Reinhardt was a Viennese, thirty-eight years of age when he undertook *The Miracle*. He began his theatrical career at the bottom of the ladder, as a "super," in his teens. He became a regular actor, and, at thirty, the director of the Kleines Theatre, Berlin. He had the ideal of the Meiningen company, which, at Drury Lane, in 1881, did so much to stimulate the imagination of the English *metteur en scène*. But, in fact, stage decoration in Germany was primitive and conventional too.

With Oscar Wilde's *Salome* Reinhardt created his first great impression. In time he proceeded to Shakespeare, notably *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He did Oscar Wilde's *Florentine*, and Bernard Shaw's *Cæsar and Cleopatra*. It was in *Kammerspiel* that he first merged the auditorium with the stage. Goethe's *Faust* stood as his masterpiece ere he was interested in *The Miracle*.

The estimate for the production and for its expenses during an eight weeks' run amounted to £70,000. Some of the principal items were: costumes, £12,500; scenery and properties, £8000; movable mountain, £800; iron framework for the cathedral doors, £1250; electric installation apparatus, £3000; electric wiring and fixing, £1500; use of the organ, £1000; artists salaries per week, including principals, £800; chorus of five hundred, £1200; one thousand minor players,



H. G. HIBBERT
Caricature by George Belcher

£1725; orchestra of two hundred, £950; boys and girls, £115; girl dancers, £175; approximately, £40,000.

Mr Payne was put in control of all the financial detail. Mr Cochran's responsibility was the production and eventual management. He made all the engagements—organised singers, actors, musicians and animals. From John Sanger's Circus came twenty-five horses. In Hungerford Market thirty dogs were picked up—selected for their weird appearance, to give a mediæval touch. Constant journeys to and from Berlin were necessary—there all the costumes and accessories were prepared by Baruchs, under the direction of Ernst Stern (born in Bukarest), Reinhardt's art director.

Cologne Cathedral was taken as the basis of the decoration; and plans were made for rich decorative effects—for Gothic arches in plaster along the sides of the building, for Gothic pillars running up into obscurity, for stained-glass windows at the back of the people and over their heads, and for rose windows at each end of the building, one over the chancel, and the other over the great doors that opened and disclosed a view of the Rhineland and its mountains and crests.

Lighting played a most important part in Stern's scheme for producing effects. Ten miles of cable were required for the special electric installation. Across the whole length of the building a great lighting bridge had to be constructed, with three islands of lights, each containing forty searchlights, and each light having its separate set of cables.

Hundreds of lights were required also to illuminate each of the cathedral windows; and again separate cables had to be carried to a great height for the purpose. For lighting the horizon of the scenes, and providing for all the necessary gradations of light, so that night should differ from morning, and summer from winter, there was a further requirement of cables and innumerable batteries.

Who can forget the impression made by Maria Carmi as the Madonna? In private life she was Frau Karl Volmoeller. She had never acted before. Reinhardt, Volmoeller, Stern, Gersdorff and Mr Cochran were discussing possible Madonnas, at the Deutsches Theatre, when Frau Volmoeller called for her husband. Mr Cochran was presented to her; and when she left said to Reinhardt:

"There's the Madonna."

"Cochran's right," said Reinhardt; and the suggestion was adopted. Frau Volmoeller was Italian—the daughter of a pastry-cook in Florence.

"How shall I bill your wife?" said Mr Cochran to Volmoeller, who produced two lists, one of Italian Christian names, and one a list of towns and villages in Italy. Mr Cochran picked Maria from one, Carmi from the other.

Humperdinck was already well known here, in the instances of *Hansel and Gretel* and *The Children of the King*, with its witch and its gingerbread house. He came of a family of musicians, and was for many years the protégé and friend of Wagner, whom he helped greatly with *Parsifal*. Humperdinck had the cultured German's adoration of Shakespeare, and

wrote scores for *The Tempest*, *A Winter's Tale*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It*.

The nun, whose lapse, toward the persuasion of an ungallant knight, and tragical fate formed the basis of the story, was Madame Trouhauowa, who for two years had been the principal mime and danseuse at the Opera in Paris. Then there was the fantastic Spielman, or Master of the Revels, Max Pallenberg, a Viennese comedian with an essential mood of tragedy.

On the first night *The Miracle* drew a vast crowd, which received it with enthusiasm. But it soon became apparent that the probable receipts, during the necessarily limited season, would not be likely to recoup the initial outlay and meet the heavy current expenses. In plain figures, the receipts were about five thousand a week, and the expenses were about five thousand a week—so the capital outlay lay dead, and ready to be written off, for theatrical property sells badly. An early visitor was W. T. Stead, who was much impressed. He said frankly to the anxious impresario: "Shall I praise you, or shall I attack you? When I was lecturing, I found that the sure 'call' to a second-night audience was an attack. In fact, I used to carry my own 'heckler.'" "I chose the attack," said Mr Cochran; "but it did no good." He got Mr Ranger Gull, the "Guy Thorne" of *When it was Dark*, to write a pamphlet, which was widely circulated. Still, no good. Business increased, but so slowly. Then a wonderful thing happened. The Harmsworth, now the Northcliffe, Press took up *The Miracle*, urged its

merits on the public in season and out of season, and saved the situation. How this was managed was not a miracle—but a mystery to the public. Here is the simple explanation: Miss Owen, Lord Northcliffe's secretary, was present at the first performance and reported well. Then came Lady Harmsworth, with a party, including Mr Beach Thomas. She was delighted, distressed by the paucity of the audience, and reported to Sir Alfred on his later return to town, having meanwhile seen *The Miracle* again and again. She brought Sir Alfred, and within half-an-hour of his leaving the building came a telephone call to Mr Cochran to repair to Carmelite House. Then began the boom.

Mr Cochran was enjoined to give the reporters every facility and all the information that could help them. Mr Hamilton Fyfe, from frequent attendance at the rehearsals, was already primed. He began with an article declaring it to be a public scandal that so beautiful a spectacle did not fill the largest hall in London. It was "a public disgrace." The tide of enthusiasm o'erflowed—for Sir Alfred Harmsworth brought in his old colleague and friend, Mr J. L. Garvin, and *The Pall Mall Gazette*. Day after day articles and statistics appeared. Olympia was filled every afternoon and evening, and the situation was saved. Sir Alfred Harmsworth made one characteristic condition. All his papers were forbidden to receive from Mr Cochran any displayed advertisement—nothing but the common!

Had it been possible to continue the run of *The Miracle* it would, no doubt, have been a financial

success. The eventual cost just doubled the estimate. And, indeed, much that appeared in the estimates was experimental, and eventually useless. The girder supporting the cathedral doors, 120 feet wide, alone cost £1100. But the largest sum was expended on the centre trap, and the flame effect, which might have been dispensed with.

Mr Cochran still propounds the belief that the success of *The Miracle* was his original inspiration—the quiet grandeur of the Cathedral scene.

CHAPTER XXIII

“THE ARCADIAN”

Comic Opera in English—Robert Courtneidge’s Career—*The Arcadians*—Always Merry and Bright—London Catchwords

THERE is always a disposition to belittle English music; to charge the public with supporting Offenbach, Lecocq, Planquette, Audran; with giving a due share to Sullivan, and, otherwise, turning a deaf ear to any Orpheus. As a matter of fact, there has been a market for English music in the theatre any time these fifty years—a demand; and a certain supply. That erratic genius, Edward Solomon, who began life as a pianist at the Middlesex Music Hall, and had an odd way of spending every few pounds he earned on a marriage licence or an elopement, did well enough with *Billee Taylor*, and might have done better. Cellier put half-a-dozen successes to his name other than *Dorothy*. Frederick Clay was capable of fine work, and would have done it had he lived. I suppose we may call Ivan Caryll English—the youthful Dutchman, Tilkins, came here in very early youth, and it is quite thirty years since his first comic opera, *The Lily of Leoville*, was done. John Crook has been too content with incidental music. I think *The Lady Slavey* represents his largest work in the public eye. Osmond Carr did

not go forward as one had hoped he would from *In Town*. Sydney Jones certainly vindicated English music with *A Gaiety Girl*, *An Artist's Model*, *The Geisha*, *A Greek Slave* and *San Toy*. Howard Talbot and Lionel Monckton bring us to date.

I am inclined to regard Robert Courtneidge as one of the finest influences on musical comedy. George Edwardes had his particular inspiration, method and *moral*. Courtneidge is an odd mixture of an actor and an idealist. He played pantomime dames for forty pounds a week, when he wanted to play Hamlet for the love of God. Not always forty pounds a week! A Scotch boy, with the glimmering of an Auld Licht guiding him still, he ran away to join a theatrical company, and paid for it with every vicissitude the stroller can know. He "padded the hard hoof" from town to town, pausing in inns to earn a crust, if he might, with his recitations.

Mr Courtneidge often recalls an incident of his first essay in management, with the late Joe Burgess. It was a perishing night at Oldham. A spy saw through the curtain an audience of three. It was decided after discussion to invite them behind the scenes, where the party sat by the fire and drank mulled ale till the storm abated, and then all, in a solemn procession, made homeward together. Probably the greatest contrast in Courtneidge's career has Manchester for its background. For a long time he was managing director of the Prince's Theatre and the historic Theatre Royal, the scene of Charles Calvert's exploits in Shakespearean production, the birthplace, if ever all the truth be told, of Henry Irving's

ambition, the first breath of the renascent English drama. At Manchester Mr Courtneidge produced a *Cinderella* pantomime of which the purity and elegance became a world's talk. It came to London, to the Adelphi. It is touring still. And Mr Courtneidge's first employment in Manchester was to help in rolling up a carpet, for a shilling a night.

You can see the tide-marks of these emotions and experiences in the man of to-day. The face is lined, the eyes are keen, the judgment is swift, often hard, always, in intention, earnestly just. The heart behind is kind. As a manager Mr Courtneidge is something of a martinet. He is the one man I have ever met in whose conversation Shakespearean quotation, better still Shakespearean phrase, comes naturally. He has an old-fashioned notion that an actor should be able to dance, and fence, and speak English with some knowledge of intonation. But his eye is never off the humblest members of his companies. The smallest excellence means advancement. In the reticule of every Courtneidge chorus girl is the contract of the prima donna.

For Mr George Edwardes, Mr Courtneidge produced *Madame Sans Gene*. It had been the dream of Florence St John's life to play this part; but she was a little *passée*, and wept her heart out when she heard the news. I often wonder if there are in life more poignant tragedies than such a moment in the life of a popular favourite contains! Poor Lycele. "Now neither Coan purples nor sparkling jewels restore those years which winged time has inserted in the public annals." The part was given to brilliant

Evie Green—and that rare and effulgent song-bird faded still more quickly. On his own account Mr Courtneidge adventured *Tom Jones*, *The Dairymaids* and *The Blue Moon*. Then with his colleagues he secured a lease of the Shaftesbury, and tentatively selected a play. Came along Mr Mark Ambient, with a rough idea of *The Arcadians*, and some scenes sketched. It was selected, but the work of completion was slow. Mr Robert Courtneidge, the avowed collaborator in many pantomimes and musical comedies, at length addressed himself to *The Arcadians*. He called in Mr A. M. Thompson, now so supreme a writer on labour and social economy that he might be forgiven if he forgot the days when he alternated the reporting of cricket matches and dramatic criticism for a Manchester paper, growing up to the libretto of a local pantomime, and then to the books of *Tom Jones* and *The Dairymaids*.

Up to the very eve of the production, the third act baffled the authors. Mr Courtneidge, called to Brighton, cogitated till he lost his train, and walked up and down Victoria platform, cudgelling his brain. When he secured a carriage, its only other occupant was a young officer, who stared at the distraught manager, but complacently fell asleep and snored. Suddenly the solution of the problem came. Mr Courtneidge sprang to his feet with a cry, feeling nervously in one pocket for a non-existent pencil to scribble notes, in the other for a match to light his dead cigar, finally deciding not to wake the sleeper, and steaming contentedly into Brighton, whence

he promptly telephoned to town two words that contented many minds: "Got it!"

An immensely important factor in *The Arcadians* was the contrast of his two comedians, Dan Rolyat, all spontaneous vivacity; irresponsibility, humour, and the lugubrious Lester as Doody the Jockey. Here is his inception:

"No man," writes Edward Spencer, "ever employed more heroic measures to keep down his weight than did the late Frederick Archer. I once accompanied him from a race meeting to a well-known training establishment in Berkshire, where the jockey was due to ride in a trial on the following morning. Our host had a reputation for doing his guests well in the way of creature comforts; and the dining-table was already spread with snowy napery and solid, old-fashioned silver, with, in the centre, a race-cup filled with choice hothouse blooms. From the kitchen in the distance was wafted the perfume of savoury meats, and we had no sooner changed our clothes and descended than a sturdy, rosy-cheeked manservant (who looked like a stableman who had put on flesh) made his appearance, his back bending under the weight of a great Tay salmon on a lordly dish. Poor Archer's face, as he surveyed the initial preparations for the evening meal, was quite piteous to watch. Then, with a shrug of the shoulders and a sigh, but ill concealed by a cynical remark, he left us, and shortly afterwards we saw him pass the window on a hack, galloping towards the training-grounds. Later on he partook of a tiny glass of champagne, and a water biscuit,

played one game of billiards, and retired to his couch."

Doody was, in truth, Mr Alec Thompson's very personal contribution to the scheme; and the greatest difficulty was experienced in getting Lester to grasp its humour. Trained to the stage from childhood—he was one of the countless thousands of Willies in *East Lynne*—he ran the gamut of the provincial actor, and finally decided that his ambition, if not his *métier*, was to become a light comedian.

Always Merry and Bright was a song which the doleful Lester sang with great effect. It came from the facile pen of Mr Arthur Wimperis; but the phrase was that of Mr Alec Thompson. It became a London catch-phrase—I think it was the last. The last word in the popularity of such a phrase is when the street urchin, addressing nobody, apropos of nothing, ecstatically hurls it to the skies. I think the first was, "There he goes with his arm in a sling," alternatively "with his eye out." That was a slur on the earliest volunteers. Then came "What a shocking bad hat" and "Does your mother know you're out." "Not for Joe" was the cheery negative of a London busman, which Arthur Lloyd annexed for a song title and made immortal. Miss Marie Lloyd claims the defiant "Let 'em all come." Whether the phrase suggested the song, or the song suggested the phrase, deponent sayeth not, but serio-comic singers quarrelled in the hospitable columns of *The Era* as to who originated "There's 'air." "Git your hair cut" was the injunction of the gallery boys at the Royal music hall to a long oil-haired official of

the house whose duty it was to change the proscenium numbers. The modern "Not 'arf" and "It's a rumour" were mere colloquialisms.

For two and a half years *The Arcadians* drew crowds to the Shaftesbury, from 28th April 1909 onwards. For ten years it has toured the provinces *sans cesse*, and looks as though it might continue its comfortable rounds twenty years more. Not to publish a balance sheet, it may be said that the Shaftesbury then took up to £220 a performance; and in those days more than one afternoon performance a week was almost unknown. *The Arcadians* cost £8000 to produce, neither a meagre nor a foolishly extravagant outlay. Probably *Sans Gene*, which cost £15,000 to produce, then held the record.

But a consideration of the company, and the salaries paid, is most interesting. It is not derogatory to the artists to say that not one of them was a well-known London star—though many of them now enjoy that distinction, and the salary pertaining. Most of them were, in fact, artists who, by their successes in his pantomimes, had attracted the notice of Mr Courtneidge. Their salaries ran, at the outset: Mr Rolyat, £50; Miss Phyllis Dare, £45; Mr Nelson Keys, £5; Mr Harry Welchman, £10; Miss Smithson, £30; Mr Lester, £35. In the chorus at £2 were Marie Blanche and Cicely Debenham. What would not a manager give if he could get one of them for the aggregate? And yet the reflection constantly recurs—there are fish in the sea as good as ever came out of it. Why don't our managers take to fishing?

CHAPTER XXIV

“THE MERRY WIDOW”

Two Struggles for Life—George Edwardes's Reluctance to Deal—Danilo detests his Part—Box and Cox Authors—Edwardes as a Gambler—Run of Two Years—Audiences and Earnings—A World-wide Popularity

A DESPERATE struggle for life is the common experience of uncommonly successful plays ; but never was struggle so desperate, so oft renewed, so uncertain on the very eve of victory as that of *The Merry Widow*. In the event madam made fortunes for many men, changed the course of theatrical enterprise in England for years, and wandered o'er the earth to find in its four corners a welcome. At one time there were concurrent performances in thirteen languages. China, Siberia and Hindustan figured in the itinerary of *The Merry Widow*. She recently, after a long interval, took to the road again. And the name of Austria is never mentioned to her !

That the maiden effort, save for a few classical exercises of the young ex-bandmaster of an Austrian infantry regiment, Franz Lehar, should be slow to find acceptance is comprehensible. But that eighteen months should elapse after her sensational capture of the Viennese imagination ere *The Merry Widow* was introduced to London caused the audience assembled

in Daly's Theatre on 8th June 1907 to pause in its raptures and wonder greatly. The explanation—in two words, the temperament and method of George Edwardes—may herein be found.

Lehar's music, and perhaps his handsome face, fascinated the daughter of the director of the Theatre an Wien. In season and out of season she insinuated *Die Lustige Witwe* to her father. He would have none of the dame, till, at a sudden loss for a temporary attraction, he agreed to give her a chance. On 30th December 1905, then, *Die Lustige Witwe*, with a book taken from the French by Victor Leon, and Leo Stern, was produced for a possible run of two weeks, with makeshift scenery, and any old costumes the wardrobe contained. The serious adventure contemplated for the season had meanwhile been settled, and its rehearsal was called for the Monday ensuing to the production of *Die Lustige Witwe* on Saturday. It was indefinitely postponed, for the stop-gap opera ran, not two weeks, but into a second year.

Its success was reported to Edwardes, but he was not impressed, and obstinately refused to consider the matter—just as years before he declined several offers of *The Belle of New York*, the last at the bargain price of £300 "all in." He never ceased to revile *The Belle* as vulgar rubbish.

At last Edwardes grudgingly gave his *metteur en scène*, "Pat" Malone, permission to visit Vienna and inform himself of the quality of *Die Lustige Witwe*. Malone returned full of enthusiasm; and Edwardes secured the opera for £1000, in behalf of the Gaiety

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Company, in spite of the assurance that it was not a Gaiety piece at all, but a Daly piece. There is a subtle difference of environment which it is hard for the layman to appreciate. The wrong theatre accounts for many a failure. As a matter of fact, when *The Merry Widow* was eventually produced at Daly's the formality of repurchasing the opera from the Gaiety Company had not been completed, and at one moment trouble threatened on that account.

Edwardes made it a condition in dealing for *Die Lustige Witwe* that the original exponent of the part, Mizzi Miller, should be included. He had not taken the precaution of viewing mademoiselle, and the position was that of Henry VIII. and Anne of Cleves. He weighed her in his mind's eye and sent her home. For she was virtuous but homely. She had the voice of an angel, but no waist. None the less, she had a good case at law, which she sturdily maintained and won. This, it will presently appear, was not the only heavy expense *The Merry Widow* had to carry.

When the piece was cast for Daly's, Edwardes laughed to scorn the suggestion that Miss Lily Elsie should play Sonia. He did not "see her" in the part at all! Miss Elsie was, of course, already an actress of distinction. She had left her first great London success in *A Chinese Honeymoon* several years behind, and indeed had done good work for Edwardes himself in the meanwhile. To Mr George Graves for Popoff he cordially agreed—Mr Graves was eventually succeeded by Mr J. F.

M'Ardle. But he was not specially keen on Mr Joe Coyne for Danilo. Coyne himself detested the part on sight, and refused to play it. He had made but two appearances in London then—at the Duke of York's Theatre in 1901 with Miss Edna May, in *The Girl from Up There*; and, after a long interval, at the Aldwych Theatre, again with Miss Edna May, in *Nelly Neil*. As to Danilo, he protested that he was a funny man, not a romantic lover, and that he could not sing. He succumbed to salary, and most of the songs were, for his relief, entrusted to other artists. When the run came to an end, Coyne professed delight, and the determination never to appear again as the hero of romance.

As to the adaptation, there was a regular *schemozzel*—nothing but the Jewish phrase seems to express the situation. Without consulting any of his colleagues, Edwardes entrusted the work to a gentleman who had certainly a musical comedy success of some note to his name, but who contrived to produce a book which Mr Malone promptly declared to have eluded the spirit of *Die Lustige Witwe* so effectually that he, on his part, declined to attempt its "production." Challenged to find a better adapter, he nominated Captain Basil Hood, with whom he returned to Vienna, and within a few weeks that deft and fanciful writer produced the version which was eventually employed—and which was viewed with complete surprise by adapter number one on the first night. For Edwardes had shirked the unpleasant duty of explaining the situation to him, and ingeniously excluded him from rehearsals. To mollify an importunate chorus girl with a sealskin coat

was one thing ; to face a humiliated and righteously angry author was another. He paid a high price, however, for his hesitancy. Legal proceedings were begun, and the easy compromise which might have been effected at an earlier stage was repudiated. In the event, both authors had to be paid ; and each accumulated a comfortable fortune. Both are dead ; but their estates are still increased from the *Widow's* cruse.

What money must have trickled through George Edwardes's fingers. Four plays ran, altogether, ten years at Daly's Theatre—*The Geisha*, *San Toy*, *A Country Girl* and *The Merry Widow*—each with upwards of seven hundred performances to its credit. But a man who bets in thousands and plays cards on an equally heroic scale is apt to know money troubles ; and, not to put too fine a point on it, Edwardes was frightfully hard up when he produced *The Merry Widow*.

Here is a card-playing adventure illuminative of his character. Dining with a friend at his favourite grill, he readily accepted the invitation of a well-known actor—with him, as the lawyers say, a clerical-looking person—to join in a game upstairs. Edwardes and his friend lost in thousands, and departed with the certainty that they had been swindled, but unwilling to take any steps that might lead to scandal—moreover, the business relations between the manager and the actor who organised the party were intimate and delicate. Years later Edwardes amazed friends sitting with him in the stalls of the Palace Theatre by a sudden and vigorous

expression of anger. He recognised, or thought he recognised, in a conjurer on the stage his clerical-looking opponent at cards.

And one more instance—this time of a casual business method. That engaging rascal, Mike Levenston, on his return from a tour of South Africa presented a petty cash account for £1000. "How do you arrive at such a figure?" queried Edwardes weakly, prompted by the accountant. "Oh," said Levenston, "I've just put down what I thought of!" "You'd better take it away and supply details," said Edwardes. "Why, certainly," said Mike; "but I shall keep on thinking." The discussion was ended with the cheque.

No fewer than seven hundred and seventy-eight performances were placed to the record of *The Merry Widow* at Daly's. Few functions in the memory of the playgoer compare with that of the last, on Saturday, 31st July 1909. In the queue one lady boasted of having seen *The Merry Widow* one hundred and twelve times, and she had close competitors.

Miss Lily Elsie, the first Sonia, returned, to be the last. Meanwhile there had been six—Miss Constance Drever, who "created" the rôle in Paris, Miss Gertrude Lester, Miss Clara Evelyn, Miss Emmy Wehlen and Miss Gertrude Glyn. The receipts for two years were little short of £250,000. Probably the opera was seen by upwards of a million people.

In New York the story was repeated. *The Merry Widow* ran a year at the New Amsterdam Theatre, and took a million dollars. Figures published about the time of the second anniversary at Daly's spoke

of £40,000 then paid to Lehar in fees; of £70,000 made by the Viennese publishers of the music; of a three million sale of the unforgettable waltz. Of course these figures are long ago out of sight. But many things conspire to prevent one getting out a more accurate statement.

There is no creature so gregarious as your London manager. To a man he went to the Continent in search of *Merry Widows*. Edwardes was so fortunate as to secure in immediate succession to *The Merry Widow*, *The Dollar Princess*, which had put £100,000 into the pocket of another poor concert master, Leo Fall. Then came in succession *The Waltz Dream*, *The Count of Luxembourg* and *The Marriage Market*. The English composer found the remnant of his occupation gone. Thousands of pounds of English money lay in Germany and Austria deposited on opera options when the war broke out. That Edwardes should, in effect, get his death-blow as a prisoner of war in Austria was the grimness of satire.

CHAPTER XXV

KATE VAUGHAN

Death in South Africa—Drury Lane Pantomime—Early Days at the Grecian—Little Em'ly—Old Style Burlesque—The Sisters Vaughan—At the Gaiety—Old English Comedy

KATE VAUGHAN sleeps in an African grave a thousand miles away. That the pathetic butterfly should flutter so far to die! Delicate always, and careless often, the once worshipped artist found life very hard towards its close. She hoped to renew health and fortune in the colony—a twofold, tragical failure! It is a strange coincidence that on the night of her death, Saturday, 21st February 1903, in Johannesburg, London was delightedly applauding her counterfeit presentment at the Gaiety, when and where George Edwardes produced a revue of its historic successes, *The Linkman* entitled. Twenty years almost exactly had elapsed since Kate Vaughan's last appearance there, in 1883; thirty years since her first appearance there, in 1873; fifty years or thereabouts since her birth.

I saw her described the other day as "a great English dancer." Doubtless the greatest this country has produced; but I imagine she would have preferred the style of actress, for that way her ambition tended, and she often protested that her earlier fame prevented that which she more desired.

The critics of her histrionic endeavour were not, in fact, encouraging, when she was supposed to make her debut as Amy Robsart, shortly after her departure from the Gaiety—proceeding to what is called old English comedy, to which she devoted nearly all the twenty years ensuing. Old Farren, on his part, flatly declared she was the best Lady Teazle of his experience. She gave, indeed, an exquisite performance, with all the graces of her earlier acquired art and the fine manner of the good society with which for many years she was in contact.

But Kate Vaughan had played many parts in drama before the Amy Robsart *matinée*, and Farren's laudation was anticipated by old Blanchard of *The Daily Telegraph*. In the 1875 pantomime at Drury Lane—*Beauty and the Beast*—Kate Vaughan was the Beauty, Zenora, of whom he wrote: "Those who beheld the charming personage introduced by Miss Kate Vaughan had no misgivings as to the bright fate in store for her. The audience must have felt a flutter of surprise when they found one chiefly known as an accomplished dancer exhibiting all the quality of an arch and refined burlesque actress; and her rendering of her first song, immediately encored with great heartiness, secured for her the warmest appreciation of her newly developed power."

Kate Vaughan's dancing always had a characteristic and incomparable charm. It is possible she was of Scandinavian descent, like a dozen other great dancers. Candelin père—that was the family

name—always maintained a claim to vast, afforested tracts of Sweden. Meanwhile his circumstances were humble. He was a musician employed at the Grecian Theatre, City Road, and there apprenticed his little daughter as a dancer to old Mrs Conquest, the wife of the proprietor and manager. It was a hard but a fine school, whose pupils played many parts in the widely varied entertainment. The old lady, in her day a famous dancer, had grown very fat and, sitting comfortably in her arm-chair, imparted the steps by nimbly moving her fingers on her knees. Among her pupils were Therese Cushnle, Johnny Milano, Dentin, Flexmore and the Leclerqs. Little Kate, delicate always, was excused the extreme rigours of the Italian school, and perhaps that saved her natural grace and charm, for the system is apt to secure supreme technique at a cost of spontaneity and even dulled intelligence. Oft, no doubt, the dancer, passing to and fro, heard the strains of

“Up and down the City Road,
In and out the Eagle,
That's the way the money goes!
Pop goes the Weasel.”

Gone is the Grecian ; gone the Eagle ; silent the song, though antiquarians wrangle still as to its meaning.

Rouse, known as “Brayvo” Rouse from the encouraging cry of his audiences, developed the Eagle Tavern and the Grecian Saloon, with many minor pleasantries of a dancing lawn and amiable arbour, from an eighteenth-century tea-garden.

He was a bricklayer, but became at any rate the architect of his own fortune, for his premature White City flourished greatly from 1822 till 1851, when he sold it to Benjamin Oliver, who, rising from the condition of a bootmaker or of a coachbuilder—the authorities furiously rage together—to that of a popular comedian, added the name of Conquest, married the dancer aforesaid and founded a stage family luxuriant in its branches.

Rouse purveyed a wonderful entertainment. He was an early patron of Flexmore and the “great little” Robson. He produced the classic operas and oratorios, and, not intentionally of course, got the valuable advertisement of a fatal balloon ascent. There was an annual loss of £2000 on the moderately sealed gate-money. But your pleasure-seeker of those days was a thirsty soul, and what Rouse lost on the roundabouts he made on the swigs—in plain English, the Eagle Tavern and the refreshment booths achieved a net profit of £3000 a year.

As Kate Candelin, Kate Vaughan took part in the dramatic performances in the Grecian. She was the Little Em'ly in an American adaptation of *David Copperfield*. She played Little Nell. George Conquest—actor, acrobat, author and stage mechanic, so long the *entrepreneur* of the Surrey—played Peggotty, but he was soon replaced by Gilbert Hastings Macdermott, not yet the “great” and still a stranger to the “halls.” A little later Miss Candelin appeared as Mary Kindly in *Flowers and Weeds of Erin*, by Macdermott, whose real name was Farrell. He began life as a bricklayer's labourer, then spent

some years at sea, getting his taste for the stage from the amateur theatricals engaged in on board ship, and eventually becoming a popular heavy man at the outlying theatres. He had the knack of writing melodrama, and put quite a number of plays on his record. A music hall engagement to fill in a summer vacation and an extraordinary success with Henry Pettitt's song, *If Ever there was a Damned Scamp*, changed the course of his career and secured him the then enormous salary of £60 a week. But he frequently revisited the glimpses of the moon to play Badger, with song, in *The Streets of London*. In 1887 he wrote and toured a melodrama called *Racing*, in which Cyril Maude made almost his first remarkable success. Macdermott was a little brutal in aspect and manner, but he had an extraordinarily clear enunciation in song and speech.

Kate Vaughan as such was a member of the company of the beautiful Miss Litton, at the Court Theatre, memorable for the production of some of W. F. Gilbert's earlier works—*Randall's Thumb*, *The Happy Land*, and *The Wedding March*. Kate Vaughan joined the company at Easter, 1872, to appear in *Re Rebecca*, a second edition of a burlesque of Andrew Halliday's tawdry, historical play fashioned from *Ivanhoe*, for Drury Lane. *Re Rebecca* was written by a young Oxonian, T. F. Plowden, who had such distinguished interpreters as Miss Kate Bishop, who played *Ivanhoe*; Miss Nelly Bromley, *Rowena*; Miss Oliver, *Rebecca*; Mr Alfred Bishop, *Brian de Bois Gilbert*; Mademoiselle Corneille d'Anka, *Richard Cœur de Lion*; and Mr



THE VAUGHAN SISTERS

KATE VAUGHAN, SUSIE VAUGHAN, AND TWO OF ADOPTION

Edward Righton, Isaac of York. The curse pronounced by Isaac on de Bois Gilbert is a typical bit of the burlesque writing of the day.

“Avenge me then, ye fates, I do implore.
May he, like me, be martyr to lumbager,
Tic doloureux, sciatica and ager,
Sore throats, neuralgia, whooping-cough and sneezings,
Rheumatics, asthma, cold and bronchial wheezings.
And while the north-east wind doth round him blow,
Ye clouds—hail, mizzle, drizzle, sleet and snow,
Rain rakes and pitch-forks, kittens, cats and dogs,
While down his throat pour vapours, mists and fogs.
May broken chilblains ever stud his toes,
May icicles hang pendent from his nose,
May winter’s cold his shaving water freeze,
May he be stopped whene’er he’s going to sneeze,
And when appalled you loudly call for helps
May palsies seize you.

SIR B.

Oh! shade of Mr Phelps.”

In the early seventies the Vaughan Troupe of dancers was formed—of Kate, her sister Susie, now a highly esteemed dramatic actress, and two ballet girls not related. The actual sisters spoke—the others merely joined in the dances to which the dialogue led up. Eventually the party addressed itself to the then popular Parisian quadrille—or *can-can*.

Kate Vaughan personally made a memorable success as the Spirit of Darkness in the *Ballet of the Furies*—produced by Frederick Strange, of the Alhambra, at the Holborn Amphitheatre—in black skirts and black tights, relieved by gilt embroidery. Not so long since I fell across a Spanish acrobat in search of the Cirque Holborn, deeply angered by

the police, who persistently directed him to Holborn Circus! He wanted to inspect the scene of the exploits of his ancestors and of other great gymnasts. Lulu, for instance. This building, now the Stadium, is often confused by theatrical writers with the Holborn Theatre, eventually the Mirror and the Duke's. It was variously known as the Alcazar, the Connaught and the Holborn Theatre Royal. John Hollingshead made it the scene of one of his eccentricities and did Beaumont and Fletcher's *Maid's Tragedy*. I believe he lived to become a director of co-operative stores installed there.

It was in truth his lifelong fight against convention that brought Kate Vaughan to the Gaiety in 1873, on Ash Wednesday. The current attraction then was Robert Reece's *Don Giovanni in Venice*, with Toole as the naughty hero and Nellie Farren as Leporello. In those days the Lord Chamberlain, with an iron hand, closed every London theatre on Ash Wednesday. Among the many institutions Hollingshead abhorred this was his pet abhorrence. On the occasion to which I refer he sent Toole to the provinces, and at the Gaiety gave a variety show, in which the Vaughan Sisters took part, also the "great" Mackney, negro delineator, the Dancing Quaker, in their camouflaged *can-can*, "Lieutenant" Walter Cole, the ventriloquist, Constance Loseby, "Jolly John" Nash, Rose Fox, "Billy" Randall and many other dead-and-gone celebrities of the music hall. It took Hollingshead years of vigorous fighting to get the Ash Wednesday restriction removed in 1886.

Meanwhile, in the autumn of 1876, the manager committed himself to the definite policy of burlesque. Then Royce, Terry and Kate Vaughan, who had just previously made a most successful appearance in a musical play by M. de Goncourt in Paris, joined the company, and Reece's little *Don Cæsar* marked the beginning of this famous quartet. Kate Vaughan was the Gretchen in *Little Dr Faust*, the Esmeralda in the burlesque of that name, the Donna Sol in *Handsome Hernani*, the Diana Vernon in *Robbing Roy*, the Morgiana in *The Forty Thieves*, the Princess Badroulbador in *Aladdin*, the Maid Marian in the *Little Robin Hood* and the Tili in *Bluebeard*.

Her popularity at the Gaiety was immense, but not her salary. I do not think it ever reached £50 a week, and that by a process of slow increase. In the summer of 1885 Miss Vaughan introduced a solo to Mr Charles Hawtrey's production of the Italian ballet, *Excelsior*, at Her Majesty's Theatre, and paragraphs of wonder appeared when it became known that the dancer's £70 a week worked out at £1 per minute of her appearance on the stage.

Nothing so effectually baffles description as dancing. Of course you can go from point to point of technique. It is like following Hamlet's soliloquy with a stop watch! Vestris said of his son that when he rose from the stage—*le ballon* is the technical phrase—you wondered would he ever return. Pavlova becomes the creature of passion. Kate Vaughan eluded all these classifications. She

was *supra-grammaticam*—but in the sense that she had made grammar her stepping-stone to freedom. The lace handkerchief she habitually carried seemed to be a part of her—the leaf of a willow bending in a gentle breeze. The soft skirts with which she replaced the tu-tu, shortened and stiffened in the seventies to a thing of horror, was not, of course, as I once heard her claim, her own invention. It was an admirable return to the modesty of the greatest dancers, but she could claim to have preceded Yvette in the cult of long black gloves. One night gay youth in the stalls saluted her by raising black-gloved hands.

Early in the eighties there was a sense of disruption at the Gaiety. Hollingshead's explanation was that he resumed work too soon after an illness, that he lost his nerve, that he had to seek partners, whereas his temperament was that of the autocrat. At any rate, Kate Vaughan went her way.

At Christmas, 1883, she was the Cinderella of Harris's pantomime—nominally by E. L. Blanchard, though the new manager regarded the veteran as an old man of the sea and ruthlessly edited his books, with the help of Harry Nicholls, later of Horace Lennard. Oscar Barrett, brilliant *maître d'orchestre*, was soon to go his way too. What memories the cast revives! The prince and her page were the Sisters Mario, Minnie and Dot, of whom the elder married Harris's friend and ally, Alfred Gibbons. Gibbons had been a draper. He founded *The Ladies' Pictorial*, brought it through many vicissitudes to a fine position, and incidentally

had much to do with the development of the "fashion plate" productions of the modern stage. He was an inveterate Bohemian, but none the less angered at his country house one Sunday by a clatter that seemed likely to bring down the ceiling of his library. Madam and her sister, in the bedroom overhead, had unearthed a set of dancing clogs and the temptation was too great! Harry Nicholls and Herbert Campbell were the ugly sisters. Whether or not this was their occasion of singing E. V. Page's *Keep it Dark*, one of the earliest and one of the best topical duets, I do not recall. *Dream Faces* I do remember as the ballad of that season. The imposing Katti Lanner was the ballet mistress, and Palladino, married long since and living in retirement in a London suburb, the *première danseuse*.

Twenty years remained, more than half of Kate Vaughan's professional career, twenty years mostly of provincial wandering, with *The Country Girl*, with *School for Scandal*, with *She Stoops to Conquer* and other forgotten comedies, which she studiously mastered. Later came *Masks and Faces*, *The Little Viscount*, *For Love and Honour* and *The Dancing Girl*. There were long intervals of illness, on occasion painfully apparent to her audiences, as, for instance, at the Farren benefit. In 1894 the curious experiment was tried of reassociating Kate Vaughan and Edward Terry in a series of glimpses from old Gaiety successes. This was in an extravaganza called *King Kodak* at Terry's Theatre. It was a grisly business. My last memory of Kate Vaughan is pleasant—an ingenious little monologue: a girl,

with an imagined partner, dancing a waltz, listening to his love-making, to his impetuous proposal, and admitting that was "How it happened." It was a brilliant exploitation of personality and art.

CHAPTER XXVI

A PAGEANT OF PRINCIPAL BOYS

The Coming of Augustus Harris—Most Music Hall, most Melancholy—
Vale the Vokes Family—Blanchard's Bitter Cry—Some Salaries
—Spangles in the Dust—Tragic Comedians

I SYMPATHISE with the small boy who refused to go to Drury Lane pantomime because "he knew that Sir Augustus Harris was only going to surpass himself." A damnable iteration of usage made the phrase tiresome. One wondered what the recorders could say next in the succession of superlatives, which began with Harris's first pantomime, *Bluebeard*, in 1879. "A cleverer libretto, better acting, or more gorgeous scenery" had, I read, "never been known." In this the Vokes family made their last appearance at Drury Lane. As for nine years previously they had, in effect, been the pantomime, you have here a survey of half-a-century at "the Lane." The ensuing Christmas saw them with their old employer, Chatterton, again, in *Valentine and Orson*, at Covent Garden. But he was rapidly nearing the final disaster, while Harris proceeded to "the biggest and most successful thing of its kind seen on the boards of our National Theatre."

Harris was, in truth, greatly responsible for the vulgarising incursion of the music hall to the

“Christmas annual.” To be sure, the “great” Macdermott had appeared at Covent Garden, but he was an actor in those days. I doubt if he had yet appeared on the music hall stage. Harris’s example was copied far and wide—crude splendour, a serio, and *quelques poupées* was his formula ; and it was not until Mr E. H. Cooper, the novelist, bringing a fresh mind to the subject, smote Drury Lane hip and thigh, and compelled its enterprising impresario to a process of cleansing and improvement which eventuated in the exquisite *Cinderella* of this year that the spirit of Perrault was set free again.

All Harris’s geese were swans. He was obstinate in his adherence to barbaric splendour and banal humour. He was unreceptive of ideas—at least, he would toss them contemptuously into a pigeon-hole and bring them out as his own long afterwards. I wonder what became of his copy of Blanchard’s *Diaries*. He had furiously noted the old man’s strictures on the modern management of Drury Lane, and was with difficulty restrained from the publication of a rejoinder.

Harris’s second pantomime, *Mother Goose*, employed two Blanches, Agnes Hewett, Carrie Coote—a ten-year-old actress who lived to become my Lady Pearce, and died at thirty-seven—Kate Santley, Arthur Roberts, James Fawn and Fred Storey—an enterprising youth who had insisted on Harris seeing him dance, with the bold assurance that he could do with each leg what Fred Vokes could only do with one ! Poor old Blanchard’s troubles had already begun, though his name was associated

with the authorship of the "book" till 1885. "Looking over the ghastly proofs of the Drury Lane Annual," he writes, "in which I find my smooth and pointed lines are turned into ragged prose and arrant nonsense. I shall consider the payment due to me an equivalent for the harm done to my literary reputation."

The Robinson Crusoe of 1881 was Fanny Leslie, still happily among us, though it is more than a year or two since she was a girl actress and dancer at the Metropolitan Music Hall, then famous for its ballets; since she was a favourite performer in *opéra bouffe* at the Alhambra, and the sprightly Phoebe Sage in Charles Reade's *Drink* at the old Princess's. Arthur Roberts, James Fawn, Harry Nicholls and Harry Jackson were a notable group of comedians.

In 1882, when Nellie Power played Sinbad, the author complained that the pantomime had been converted into a "very dreary music hall entertainment. For the misprinted and grossly interpolated book I am in no way responsible. Hardly anything done as I intended, or spoken as I had written; the music hall element crushing out the rest, and the good old fairy tales never to be again illustrated as they should be." Nellie Power, to be sure, was a music hall artist, but she had proved at the Vaudeville to be a charming actress in burlesque. She married a scamp, and her later life was unhappy, though she rose again to popular favour ere she died, with a song by the veteran E. V. Page, *La di Da*.

Nelly Power's support included Vesta Tilley, as Captain Tra-la-la. Strangely enough, Vesta Tilley was only once, as King Courage, in the 1890 *Beauty and the Beast*, principal boy at the Lane. In the provinces, especially at Birmingham and at Liverpool, she was easily the most popular boy, and in the former city has received, I suppose, the "record" salary of £500 a week. She has, of course, an intimate family relationship with Birmingham. There for many years was her home. She was born at the neighbouring city of Worcester, her father, a circus artist known as Harry Ball, actually Powles, being a great "character."

To *Puss in Boots*, at Christmas, 1887, there was an inroad from musical comedy of "Tilly" Wadman and of Letty Lind—not long emerged from the state of "La Petite Letitia." Letty was one of the large and talented Birmingham family of Rudge, which includes Miss Millie Hylton, Miss Adelaide Astor and Miss Lydia Flopp. Letty was apprenticed to Howard Paul, the entertainer, who gave her the name by which she became famous.

Harriet Vernon soon restored the atmosphere of the variety stage, with Lady Dunto, a music hall peeress, who as one of the Sisters Bilton was a fine figure in Bohemia. "Fresh, fresh, fresh as the new-mown hay" was the refrain of their best-remembered song. But no doubt the most music hall and most melancholy pantomime of all was that which associated in *Bo-Peep*—with Ada Blanche as Boy Blue—Marie Loftus, a brilliant boy, in the curiously ill-chosen character of Bo-Peep; Marie Lloyd

as Red Riding-Hood, Little Tich, Herbert Campbell and Dan Leno.

Marie Lloyd appeared in three Drury Lane pantomimes—*Humpty Dumpty*, *Little Bo-Peep* and *Robinson Crusoe*, respectively in 1891, 1892, 1893—as principal girl. Her ambition to play principal boy was gratified a little later at a suburban house ; but the “ Queen of Comedy ” was not at her best in either character. Much, I recall, was made of the fact that her Drury Lane salary was £100 a week. When Mr Arthur Collins did *The Sins of Society* at Drury Lane he was very anxious to have Marie Lloyd play the music hall heroine, *vis-à-vis* to Chevalier ; but she declined—as she has declined revue—feeling, with propriety, that the music hall is her *métier*.

Ada Blanche played Dandini in *Cinderella* at Christmas, 1878, and she was the Princess in *Mother Goose*, Harris’s second (1880-1881) pantomime. Her career as “ principal boy ” began at Christmas, 1892, as Boy Blue in *Little Bo-Peep*. Followed *Robinson Crusoe*, *Dick Whittington*, the Prince in *Cinderella*, *Aladdin* (Arthur Collins’s first pantomime) and the *Babes in the Wood*. Amurath (after an interval) to Amurath succeeds, for the delightful prince of the most recent *Cinderella* was Miss Marie Blanche, Miss Ada Blanche’s niece.

Dan Leno arrived at Drury Lane at Christmas, 1888, to appear in *The Babes in the Wood*. Harris had noted him at the Surrey, where he played two Christmases. The little man was elated at the prospect of £28 a week for himself and wife at

Drury Lane. His last salary was £240 ; in the meanwhile, George Graves has nearly doubled that. He was at Drury Lane for six years from 1909. Dan Leno was engaged to play the " wicked aunt " in *The Babes in the Wood*. Not yet was he associated with Herbert Campbell, whose fellow babe was Mr Harry Nicholls. Next year Leno played the " dame " again, in *Jack and the Beanstalk* ; the year following he figured as Sir Lombard Street in *Beauty and the Beast*. Then in *Humpty Dumpty*, 1890-1891, began that memorable partnership with Campbell as the King and Queen of Hearts, to be continued through *Little Bo-Peep*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Dick Whittington*, *Cinderella*, *Aladdin*, *The Babes in the Wood*, *The Forty Thieves*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Bluebeard*, *Mother Goose*, and *Humpty Dumpty*—in which the twain sang :

" And we hope to appear
For many a year
In the panto of old Drury Lane." .

Within a few months both were dead !

It seemed hard to identify the wretched creature who died in a Liverpool institution a while ago with brilliant, high-spirited Maggie Duggan, for two years a prominent figure in Drury Lane pantomime ; still more difficult to visualise her with Frank Dicksee's chaste and beautiful *Evangeline*, for which she was the model. Maggie Duggan returned to her source. She was a street urchin whose first boots were provided by a pantomime engagement ; she joined a troupe of dancers and expanded

to a popular burlesque boy, eventually to a favourite of the variety stage. Queenie Leighton was for years a favourite "boy" at Drury Lane.

Nellie Stewart, an Australian prima donna in comic opera, made a most engaging Ganem in *The Forty Thieves* of 1898; but on the eve of the next year's pantomime fell ill. In this emergency, Violet Cameron was engaged—it was, I think, her last appearance in public. In does not seem so long ago since a comfortable-looking lady of middle age and suburban aspect was persuaded to the piano. She adjusted her glasses and sang like an angel gem after gem from the *opéra bouffes* popular in the eighties. It was Violet Cameron, living, as she had lived for years, in retirement at Worthing, paying one of her rare visits to town. There she died, fifty-seven years of age, nearly half-a-century after she made her first appearance on the stage, a child of nine, as Karl, in *Faust and Marguerite* at the Princess's Theatre. For several years ensuing she was a baby actress in pantomime at Drury Lane and the Adelphi. For she came of a theatrical family. Her mother was one of the Sisters Brougham, favourite performers at the Canterbury and the Oxford—the first, I suppose, of a long line of music hall "sisters," though, if report may be believed, none came near them in the distinction of their musical attainments. She was a relative, too, of Lydia Thompson, whom you might almost call an historic "principal boy" in pantomime and burlesque, and whose "farewell benefit," in extreme old age, is still within memory.

Violet Cameron in the hey-day of *opéra bouffe* went from success to success—from *Les Cloches de Corneville* to *Madame Favart*, to *Olivette*, *La Mascotte*, *Boccaccio*, *Rip Van Winkle* and *Falka*. She made an amazing marriage with a man of Greek extraction, and quite soon the theatrical world rang with a scandal in which the name of a well-known peer was involved. There were stage-door scenes, and a terrible to-do. The sordid details of an unhappy domestic life were eagerly devoured by a public that loved to hear the worst of its pretty favourite. It was, let it be told, her prettiness and charm, and the purity and sweetness of her voice, rather than dramatic power, that made Violet Cameron's reputation. She sought refuge in a long American tour. She came back to find herself still beloved—appearing in *Faust Up-to-Date* at the Gaiety, in *Morocco Bound* at the Shaftesbury, and in the pantomime at Drury Lane. And then she slipped into a sedate, comfortable, happy retirement.

Dainty little Marie George graduated from "principal girl" to "principal boy" as Aladdin in 1909. This was the year of reformation, when Sir Frank Burnand was brought in to give the literary touch demanded by the *Mail*, and in the course of time the principal boy was suppressed; in her stead, a manly baritone. The first was Mr Wilfrid Douthitt, the second Mr Bertram Wallis.

But Mr Arthur Collins returned to convention, or at any rate half-way, when he persuaded Miss Madge

Titheradge to become the most beamish of boys, with a dramatic recitation thrown in.

Oscar Barrett, long musical director at the Lane, produced the pantomime of the interregnum between Harris and Collins, *Aladdin*, introducing the only music hall artist who, in my experience, has been able to assimilate his special art to that of the stage. But Paul Cinquevalli was a born comedian, and in other circumstances might have rivalled Wyndham. It was characteristic of him that, broken to bits in a fall from a trapeze—the Little Flying Devil was his earlier name—he learned to juggle during many weeks in hospital. Not here to discourse of his miraculous skill—he was, by the way, particularly proud of Lucas's account of him in *A Wanderer in London*—I knew him as a most gracious and charming gentleman. His death was one of the little tragedies of the war. In spite of his Italian name, he was a Teuton, German or Austrian, born Kestner, although world wandering from infancy had robbed him of all homing instinct. He was completely cosmopolitan. His one loyalty was to his calling, and when the vulgar instinct of the people to whom his charity had been his religion made a pose of ostracising him, it broke his heart.

On second thoughts, I suppose that Harry Fragon must be classed with the variety artists. Actually Pott by name, he betook himself in disgust, with his piano, to Paris, having been scornfully rejected at the Middlesex, or "Old Mogul," music hall when he applied for work there. He became the idol of

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the French capital, and introduced his piano to the 1905 *Cinderella*, and to the two succeeding pantomimes with rare facility. He proved to be a comedian of finesse. Poor Fragson! He was murdered by his father in a fit of jealous rage.



A WEDDING GROUP

TOM THUMB AND LAVINIA WARREN
BEST MAN. COMMODORE NUTT
BRIDESMAID, MINNIE WARREN
NEW YORK, FEB. 10, 1863

CHAPTER XXVII

A DWARF, SOME MONSTERS AND A MAGICIAN

The Countess Magri and Tom Thumb—Egyptian Hall Alumni—
The Siamese Twins—The Two-headed Nightingale—Chang—
Maskelyne and Cooke's Entertainment

POOR little Countess Magri! Her death in December last, at the advanced age of eighty, attracted little notice; and yet the reflected glory of a world-wide celebrity was hers. More than fifty years ago, London, as the painter Haydon bitterly recorded, was obsessed by Tom Thumb—madam's first husband, to whose memory she was always faithful. She spoke somewhat contemptuously of the Count, as a philanderer. His title, at any rate, was genuine, as that of his Georgian prototype, Count Borulaski, was. The knighthoods of Xit, the Tower dwarf, and of Charles the First's favourite, "Sir" Geoffrey Hudson, are legendary, I fear. The Countess Magri was of a retiring nature, and, having rather ungraciously exhibited herself, she hated to go abroad. When last in London, at the time of the Tinytown annexe to the Fun City at Olympia, she had become an ardent Christian Scientist, and regularly attended the services of the believers. She was proud to think that she bore a likeness to Queen Victoria, and sedulously copied that estimable lady's dowdy style of dress. Her tiny body should have been

embalmed and enshrined in the Egyptian Hall. But "England's Home of Mystery," as for many years it was known under the direction of Maskelyne & Cooke, had long disappeared, to be replaced by a caravanseraï of company promoters. For nearly a century this sombre structure faced Burlington House. It was built for a natural history museum ; and its original *entrepreneur* claimed to have accumulated twenty thousand quadrupeds, birds, reptiles, fishes, insects, shells and fossils from every part of the known world at an outlay of £25,000. He soon found an annexe of Napoleonic relics more profitable. Then the Siamese twins set a fashion in monsters. For thirty years these pathetic creatures were what I suppose you would call popular favourites. There was much speculation as to whether one would survive the illness of the other, after an operation for which preparations were made, but he did not. The Missing Link, apparently half man, half monkey, and of alarming ferocity, had a short life, for Curtes, the lion king of the day, forced his way into the cage, tore off a mask, and revealed an acrobat named Henry Leach. The Two-headed Nightingale, Millie Christine, was another distinguished visitor to the Egyptian Hall. There were two of her—negresses of a considerable intelligence, fair vocalists, joined as the Siamese Twins were. They were brought to this country by the son of the cotton planter on whose estate they were born, and tended with much care and kindness. Anon came a giant differing from all other giants I have known, in that he was symmetrical,

intelligent and charming. Chang invested a fortune made by showing himself in the tea trade, and had a shop near the Holborn Restaurant. After years of retirement he died, no great while ago, at Bournemouth. The Egyptian Hall housed more edifying visitors in Albert Smith, with his ascent of Mont Blanc; Howard Paul; Arthur Sketchley, illustrating the adventures of Mrs Brown, a great character in her day; Artemus Ward; Maccabe, the still unequalled protean artist; Professor Pepper with his ghost, and so on.

It was, I believe, to the genius of Maskelyne that the description of the Egyptian Hall as "England's Home of Mystery" was due. When, in 1903, the hall was demolished to make room for the great block of offices and flats known as Egyptian House, there was an attempt to carry the phrase, with the entertainment, to St George's Hall, where Maskelyne followed another famous entertainment, that of the German Reeds, but it did not seem to fit. The entertainment was varied a little, the built-up illusions and sleight-of-hand performances alternating with dramatic sketches and musical and other "turns."

There was eager competition among aspiring artists for an engagement at St George's Hall, even at modest terms, for it was apt to bring other engagements, especially at society functions. Barclay Gammon was a notable instance of this. He had four or five pounds a week at St George's Hall; at the Palace he rose to £120, and probably doubled this by drawing-room work. The St

George's Hall audience was amazingly respectable, and the entertainment, to the present contributor, unspeakably boring.

With Maskelyne, at the outset of his career, there was associated one Cooke, who was more of a chopping-block for the other than a partner; also William Morton, unobtrusively for many years the capable business manager, and able, if he would, to tell much of the vicissitudes of the little party in their earlier adventures through the provinces—by way of the Crystal Palace and St James's Hall to the Egyptian Hall.

Maskelyne was always masterful. In the course of time Morton went his way to become a pioneer of the suburban theatre at Greenwich. Cooke was pensioned off and died. His name was promptly removed. Maskelyne took into later partnership David Devant, a prestidigitator of rare charm and resource, especially fascinating in contact with children. But Devant is understood to have found the music halls more lucrative, and at an advanced age Maskelyne resumed the active control of his business. He was performing daily until illness seized him.

Maskelyne always claimed that the *matinée* was copied from his scheme by the theatres—by Irving, in fact, who remarked upon the good business done in an afternoon at the Egyptian Hall, and promptly tried the experiment of a *matinée* at the Lyceum. So it may be; but there is a more interesting point of contact between the men, for Irving also, in the intervals of theatrical engagements, addressed

himself to the exposure of the Davenport Brothers, I believe, in Manchester.

Throughout his life Maskelyne was possessed by a passionate hatred of so-called spiritualists. His encounter with the eccentric—if that be the sufficient adjective—Archdeacon Colley is well within memory. Archdeacon Colley challenged Maskelyne to reproduce certain phenomena, and especially to produce a spirit form from the side of a man. This the conjurer did triumphantly; but the £1000 glibly offered by Archdeacon Colley was not forthcoming. The quarrel was continued in the Law Courts and much dirty linen washed. Archdeacon Colley predeceased his antagonist. More recently Maskelyne contested the claim of some youngsters to have copied his box trick successfully. Technically he lost the case, but he contrived to keep the secret of his own box immune—as he did that of Psycho, the automaton chess-player which baffled and beat every champion, which figured in *Punch* and Parliament, and which after a rest of five and twenty years came out as fresh and fascinating and elusive as ever. Psycho's only serious rivals have invariably stood revealed as human deformities accommodated to a machine.

Maskelyne used to say that he had made two fortunes. That which he lost he probably sacrificed to an impulsive speculation at the time of the Diamond Jubilee. He acquired an immense warehouse in St Paul's Churchyard, undertaking to raze it to the ground, to use the vacant space for a stand,

to rebuild the warehouse according to specifications, and to hand it over to its original owners, a well-known firm of drapers, at an agreed date. It was all to be done with the quickness of one of his conjuring tricks. So, indeed, it was, but he lost heavily on the deal. I do not believe he made a great deal out of the typewriting machine, which was another by-product of his extraordinarily fertile invention.

“They rush by thousands to see Tom Thumb. They push, they fight, they scream, they faint, they cry help and murder. They see my bills and caravan, but do not read them. Their eyes are on them, but their sense is gone. In one week, 12,000 persons paid to see Tom Thumb, while only 133½ paid to see my *Aristides*.” So, bitterly, wrote Benjamin Haydon of these competing exhibitions at the Egyptian Hall, but it is not quite fair to lay the unhappy painter’s suicide to Tom Thumb’s account. Other humiliations and many embarrassments had driven him to madness. Of Tom Thumb’s popularity, Haydon was an accurate enough reporter. It was greatly assisted by Queen Victoria, who twice received the little man, permitting a freedom of conduct, and laughing at a remark, that would have been outrageous impudence in a normal creature. Tom was received—and nursed—by the Dowager Queen Adelaide and chaffed the Duke of Wellington about the battle of Waterloo. His impersonation of Napoleon was his *tour de force*.

Phineas T. Barnum discovered Tom Thumb, as Charles Sherwood Stratton, at Bridgeport, Con-

necticut, in 1842. He was then four years of age, not quite two feet high, weighing less than sixteen pounds, but "perfectly formed." Barnum engaged him for four weeks, at three dollars a week, with all travelling and boarding expenses for himself and his mother. The engagement was extended to a year, at seven dollars a week, with a gratuity of fifty dollars at the end of the engagement. Tom Thumb came to England in 1846, appearing in Liverpool immediately after his arrival; then to the Egyptian Hall. He had a persistent friend in the American ambassador, the Hon. Edward Everett, to whom he owed his introduction to London society. The Rothschilds were among his earliest entertainers.

Eventually Barnum formed a party of manikins. There was Commodore Nutt, less tall, but also less gifted, than Stratton, who sang and danced and cultivated many parlour tricks, and there was Lavinia Warren, whose affections the General diverted from the Commodore. Barnum made a long story of their rivalry, and engineered the marriage of Tom Thumb and Lavinia in a fashionable church, before half New York. A like, unlovely exploitation of the altar was effected in the case of the Aztecs, at St George's, Hanover Square, in 1867. I have seen it stated that Commodore Nutt solaced himself with Lavinia Warren's younger sister Minnie. This is not the case. Minnie, who joined the party, married a rival dwarf, and soon died in childbirth. The Commodore became quite a successful man of business, in partner-

ship with his brother—these twain being the only dwarfs in an otherwise normal family. The Thumbs lived happily together for many years—eventually, in comfortable retirement. Tom became rather gross in appearance, with a skimpy beard. He died of apoplexy in 1883, and New York built a forty-foot column over his grave, surmounted by his effigy. Madam, after many years of widowhood, married another dwarf, Count Magri, and appeared at Olympia so recently as 1908, when Mr Charles B. Cochran aggregated half-a-hundred dwarfs in a so-called Lilliputian City. The cleverest of them was Smaum Sing Poo, a tiny Burmese acrobat, since dead—symmetrical and wonderfully skilled. Then there was “Princess” Pauline, a diminutive serio-comic singer. But the thirty or forty dwarfs forming the background were wizened little creatures, for all the world like the gnomes in *Rip Van Winkle*. I believe they breed freely in some remote Austrian village, and often live to a great age.

CHAPTER XXVIII

FRENZIED FINANCE

War and the Theatre—Changing Audiences—An Immense Increase of Rents—The Evil of the Syndicate—What the “Bars” mean

AT the outset of the war there was much speculation as to the effect it would have on the theatres. Previous wars, it was recalled, had awakened in the public a great desire for diversion. At first it seemed as though this experience were to be repeated. Then came critical months and years, and disaster stared the manager in the face. Air raids, bereavements and general apprehension kept the playgoer at home. The authorities imposed ruinous restrictions on theatrical enterprise. And then again a change. The theatres, whether presenting good shows, bad or indifferent, prospered exceedingly. Simultaneously there was an immense increase in the rentals.

A curious difference became apparent in the personnel of the audiences. The regular, known patron of the theatres seemed to disappear. In his place came strangers, constant in mutation—cosmopolitan visitors to town, soldiers home on leave, mainly anxious, it seemed, to kill time under any cover and, if they paid any attention to the performance, caring most for inane, vulgar and often indecent revue, or crude and unlikelike studies of

warfare. This migratory pleasure-seeker went his way. The habitual, mainly intelligent playgoer resumed his habit. The character of the entertainment improved. But rents kept up, and every mood of labour increased the anxiety of the manager.

Journalistic comment on the situation was profuse, and mostly ignorant. Freeholds, and leaseholds with varying ground rents were all one. It failed to differentiate between a theatre disbursing £2000 a week to run a huge spectacular entertainment, and capable of taking £3000 a week, and a theatre spending half the money to run a little comedy, but capable only of accommodating half the attendance. It accepted without question the figures of managers, who had been prodigally extravagant, to avoid the tax on "excess profits." On the other hand, it brought wild charges of "profiteering."

No doubt many fortunate leaseholders seized the opportunity of securing large profit rentals and retiring from dangerous speculation in "production." But it does not seem to me they did more than take a shrewd advantage of the market. A much worse culprit is the reckless, often technically inexperienced manager, who, backed by a wealthy syndicate, has no care but to secure his own well-paid position, and does so heedless of cost. He is most responsible for inflated rents. Rumour credits such a syndicate with a loss of £30,000 during a few months. The merest tyro in accountancy, setting its expenses, which included payments to the promoting manager approximating £100 a week, against the possible receipts of a theatre always crowded to

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its utmost capacity, saw that a profit was hopelessly impossible. The excuse was that a business was in the way of being built up !

It is ridiculous to make a crude comparison between the rentals of, say, twenty-five years ago and those of to-day. There has been an immense artificial increase, but there has been a very large natural increase. Happy the present owners of the London Coliseum and the London Opera House, who were able to buy them at a tithe of their cost from the debris of disastrous company flotation. Why, even the Cinderella (or Court) Theatre changed hands the other day for £20,000, showing a cent. per cent. profit to the vendor !

“ Twenty new theatres ” was glibly suggested the other day as a relief to the situation, with the suggestion that to build them would be the best possible investment for any real estate man, who should let the theatrical men concern themselves with the theatrical side. But would it ? You have to reckon first with the fastidiousness of the County Council as to sites and structure, the increased cost of land, material and labour. You could once begin and complete a theatre in twelve months for £50,000. You would need now to at least double each estimate. And so your rent trouble is just as great as ever. Plans for a suggested new theatre were lately submitted to a well-known manager who quickly figured out that the ultimate rental would be £20,000 a year !

Rent to the layman is just rent and nothing more. But there are important qualifications, that need

not be too technically discussed. They are of four kinds. The would-be tenant sometimes learns that he must repair the theatre and hand it over in a state of proper maintenance at the end of his tenancy. Some of the most pretentious West End houses were allowed to dilapidate terribly during the war—the matter was often beyond the volition of the immediate lessee, who could get neither labour nor material, and was indeed peremptorily forbidden to spend more than a certain amount of money on construction, improvement or decoration. But he took good care that when the time came the outlay should not be his. A recently incoming tenant had to spend £15,000 on a house which he had esteemed himself fortunate to secure at an enormous rental. This was probably the extreme case. But an outlay of £5000 has not been uncommon in such circumstances. During the term of his personal tenancy of the Haymarket Theatre Mr Frederick Harrison has, I believe, spent not less than £50,000 on the reconstruction and improvement of the Haymarket.

Then there are the “bars,” sometimes included in the rental and sometimes reserved. The “bars” mean a monopoly of the sale of refreshments, sweetmeats and similar commodities, programmes and the conduct of the cloakrooms. In the notable instance of the Lyceum the Melvilles reserve this monopoly, which yields them an annual profit almost exactly equal to their rent.

Augustus Harris put it on record that when he entered Drury Lane his only possessions were the

lease and the key, and that his working capital was secured by the sale of the "bars" for £1000 cash. That was in 1885. He would command a much higher figure now. A not uncommon offer of the speculator in this monopoly is £40 a week, and his profit is probably cent. per cent., of which the least proportion is on the actual bars—for the consumption of alcohol in a West End theatre is very small.

Another qualification of a nominal rent is the proprietary seat. A lessor will retain for his specific use a box, a few stalls and a few dress-circle seats. Of course he cannot sit in them all at once; nor does he fill them with sisters, cousins and aunts. They are sold for him by the "libraries," and under happy conditions may yield him £2000 a year, which, of course, diminishes the receipts of the tenant, or, you may put it, increase the figure of his rental by that amount. Happy the theatrical lessee—there are a few—who is not encumbered by proprietary seats.

Finally, in addition to the rent, the tenant is often invited for some mysterious purpose of accountancy, into which it would sometimes be unedifying to penetrate, to pay a premium. A private payment of £100 a week was made by the immediate lessee to the immediate lessor of a theatre for a recent intercalary season.

I suppose His Majesty's easily takes rank as the finest theatre in London in situation, style and structure. It has seldom been let at a weekly rental—*Chu Chin Chow*, for instance, is run on sharing terms. On one occasion it was let to Edward

Hedmont for an opera season at £400 a week. It cost Tree £70,000 to build, and it is probably the most substantial lot of theatrical building in London. Its ground rent is £3500. Taking, at the usual rate, interest on capital, the ground rent, the rates, insurance and depreciation, it stood Tree at £7500 a year. Before he went to America he would willingly have sold out for £90,000, but found no eager bidders. The theatre was sold after his death to a North Country capitalist, represented by Grossmith and Laurillard, for £110,000. The same gentleman bought the Shaftesbury for them at upwards of £70,000. This theatre was built some thirty years ago by John Lancaster, a shrewd Manchester merchant, for the gratification of his wife, Miss Wallis, a well-known Shakespearean actress, at an outlay of £20,000, but it has meanwhile been much improved. Mr Robert Courtneidge and his firm long leased it at the rate of £120 a week.

Another very cheaply built theatre was the Comedy, which cost £20,000—and this in spite of the fact that a party wall grew up with an incline over adjoining property, and might have led to a costly lawsuit had not the owner courteously pointed out the increasing encroachment in good time.

Not so long ago a well-known manager happened to be in want of a theatre and decided to pay £320 a week for the Kingsway. He is, in fact, the head lessee of the theatre, in which capacity he pays a rental not exceeding £100 a week. It got into the hands of a financial firm, by which it was sub-leased at £225 a week to an actress who, unfortunate in her

personal productions, still managed to sub-let it for £300 a week, so that between the first rental and the last rental of the *entrepreneur* at the time of this writing there are three profit rentals approaching an aggregate of £300.

At one time this house of many mutations went a-begging at £20 a week. I have seen an opera played there by Parsees ; I have heard the sinister-looking hero of a mysterious murder trial bellow his apologia from its stage ; I have known the audience break the seats to hurl the fragments at reluctant prize-fighters. Penley prematurely ventured in, and lost £20,000 on the theatre, thinking it would be absorbed in the Strand improvement scheme. Miss Lena Ashwell first gave it artistic distinction, but made no money. Its one huge success was made with *The Great Adventure*.

Once £100 a week might have been regarded as the unit of West End theatre rental. You could not use that figure doubled—hardly trebled—as a safe basis to-day. The Savoy is currently reported to have reached the extreme figure of £500 a week. This has been denied ; but certainly £500, reckoning with percentages or a premium, was the basis of a negotiation. The estate of the late H. B. Irving holds the superior lease here, and is making an immense profit on its rent (with, of course, various responsibilities) of less than £100, though there are intervening tenants. There has been a disposition on the part of the “bed-rock” proprietors to sell while prices are so high. For instance the Apollo, one of very few freehold theatres in London, recently

changed hands at £150,000. Years must elapse ere the present leaseholders can be disturbed. The vendors represented Hans Lowenfeld, as to the exact degree of whose alienage there was an interesting discussion in the Law Courts lately. Which, again, calls to mind that two immense theatrical undertakings here are supported by the wealth of Russian Jews, another by that of a Greek. The revelation of the powers behind the throne would provide a sensation indeed. On what terms the Gaiety and the Adelphi were lately leased to the Grossmith Laurillard group I cannot say; but a cheque for £240,000 changed hands.

Mr James White, who lately bought the lease of Daly's Theatre, made it known, however, that he meant to make himself personally responsible for the productions there. The purchase price, £200,000, included a large amount of stock-in-trade, copyrights, costumes and so forth. But it is safe to say that the sum to be directly apportioned to the theatre is more than double the capital value at which it stood on its opening.

Sir Charles Wyndham, who left £300,000, was on that account called a very shrewd man of business. In fact he was somewhat impulsive, but most invariably fortunate, alike in the City and in theatrical speculation. With extraordinary casualty the late Lord Salisbury granted Wyndham a lease of a vast area of slum property between Charing Cross Road and St Martin's Lane, at the existing ground rents, on the condition that he bore the expense of clearing the site. The New Theatre and Wyndham's

Theatre were not extravagantly built, so they stand the Wyndham and allied interests at the very moderate figure of £200 a week. The New Theatre cost a pre-war tenant £10,000 a year! Wyndham's Theatre is leased to Mr Frank Curzon for a term of years at £8000 a year, which shows a handsome profit to his landlords; but he could make an equally handsome profit himself. The Criterion was let by the original partners in Spiers and Pond to the late Alexander Henderson, who quickly transferred his interest to Wyndham for £1000, and the surrender of some share interests. Very soon the benevolent Spiers & Pond granted a renewal of the lease for many years at the rate of £50 a week. Long ago the Criterion commanded £250 a week; now, probably, £400. But Lady Wyndham has a predilection for a personal interest.

Disaster followed disaster in respect of the vast building speculation of which the Strand Theatre is the centre. At one time in its history, which is encompassed by a few years, a bonus was actually offered to any manager who could run it rent free to save it from mildew. It was sold with some adjoining property for £6000, with a £4000 a year ground rent, in 1911. Its annual rent is now £12,000.

For several houses there is no quotation in the fevered market. Mr Frederick Harrison, for instance, of the Haymarket, Mr Anthony Prinsep, and Miss Marie Lohr, in respect of the Globe, and the Gattis in respect of the Vaudeville, never part with their control.

CHAPTER XXIX

THEATRICAL FORTUNES

A Salary of £750 a Week—George Edwardes's Estate—Garrick, Kean, Macready—The Savoyards—Dan Leno at £20—Some Music Hall Magnates—Circus Celebrities

RUMOUR credits a music hall artist with a recent salary, in revue, of £750 a week. This is certainly the highest point reached in the way of individual emolument, not taking into consideration the share of the receipts now, in circumstances, accorded to a popular favourite. Actors have occasionally left large fortunes, but upon examination it seldom proves that these have been made by sheer acting—occasionally by the combination of management with acting; more often by speculation outside the theatre. Wyndham's fortune of £300,000 was the largest, so far, accredited to an actor for probate of his will, but Wyndham made much of his money, most of it, probably, by fortunate speculation.

Probate figures, I may point out, are apt to be illusory. Penley's once large fortune had dwindled to a nominal £15,000, and that was mostly pledged. Tree's will was proved in respect of £40,000, but his interest in *Chu Chin Chow* soon increased that manifold. Harris's estate probably worked out to a large increase on £23,677. When George Edwardes died his estate would assuredly not have realised a

tithe of £50,000. But careful nursing, especially of Daly's Theatre, and the successful production of *The Maid of the Mountains* immensely increased its value. Considerable surprise was expressed that young Harry Irving should have left £40,000, double the fortune of his father, and many times that of his brother, Laurence, who left but a few hundreds. A rather unkind comparison of the ability and characteristics of the two boys, uttered by Irving, who earnestly desired Harry to keep to his original profession, the Bar, and Laurence to that of diplomacy, comes to mind. Harry Irving's fortune was mainly due to the increase in value of his lease of the Savoy. Weedon Grossmith, who died about the same time, left but a few thousands. He was an embittered man, and left a solemn injunction to his widow not to speculate in the theatre. Probably the largest fortune made out of acting was that of Toole—a manager too, but not counting seriously as an actor manager. He disposed of £80,000 in an eccentric will, which left oddments to a multitude of friends, many of whom predeceased him. In like manner Henry Neville made his will a sort of diary of predilections, altered from day to day, and containing a curious dissertation on Masonry. It was surprising that he left no more than £7724, just as it was surprising that Edward Terry, another ardent Mason, by the way, left no more than £44,000. Probably in each case there were other than testamentary dispositions. Neville had a liberal taste in investments—a hotel at Reading and a music hall at Clapham, for instance.

Compare the fortunes of half-a-dozen great actors of old time. Garrick, according to Mr Percy Fitzgerald, "accumulated £140,000" during his management of Drury Lane. When Kean died all his possessions had to be sold to pay his debts. Charles Kean left £35,000; Macready, £20,000; Phelps less than half that sum.

So soon as George Alexander began to make real money he established a fund, as apart from the theatre, on which he determined that he would never entrench for theatrical speculation. At one time the theatre showed a persistent disposition to lose money, and he declared to friends that he would be steadfast to his resolution—that when a certain point had been reached he would wish the theatre good-bye and retire on his now adequate reserve.

George Conquest once expounded to me his theory of management: "If Augustus Harris wants a steam-engine he buys a steam-engine—I look round the theatre for a few tables and paint the tops like wheels." Conquest's salary limit was £5, and when a confident youngster asked for more he promptly said: "Good-bye, my lad—and good luck at the West End." He was in a generous mood when he gave Dan Leno and his wife a joint salary of £20 for the little man's first pantomime. He left £64,000; Andrew Melville left considerably more. He was little more than a schoolboy when his father, a handsome, effective, irresponsible actor, left him in charge of a West Country theatre, which the wideawake boy soon learnt was bankrupt and proceeded to pull it together. Melville was known

at the Grand Theatre, Birmingham, to rewrite a melodrama to suit a stock of posters.

One's mind has been turned to the Gilbert-Sullivan-Cardé combination again. Cardé, on the instigation of his wife, was a shrewd but heroic speculator. Probably the Savoy Hotel had a good deal to do with his quarter of a million, just as a passion for gambling reduced Sullivan to a comparatively modest £54,000. Gilbert recognised the source of his £111,000 by generous bequests to theatrical charities, to which much of the Kendals' large fortune goes. Living authors could easily o'ercrow Gilbert's figure, just as a living actor and a living manager are credited with larger fortunes than any here enumerated. Music hall artists have not, according to Somerset House, shown a disposition to save. Dan Leno's £10,000 was mostly due to a fortunate insurance. But there is a "comique" of immense wealth still among us. It was a matter of very great surprise that the music hall magnates, among whom there was a large mortality a few years ago, left so little—Henri Gros less than £10,000; Adney Payne upwards of £20,000—for, not to put too fine a point on it, there were some pretty pickings in the company flotations of the nineties. Sir Edward Moss's fortune, exceeding £200,000, began, of course, in the music hall, but its large increase was from many other sources; and indeed many of his clients in music hall enterprise were much aggrieved by his tendency to decrease his holdings. Sir Oswald Stoll differs in this respect—he certainly has faith in the earning capacity and the

future of his enterprises. Herbert Sprake, the last individual proprietor of Collins's Music Hall—named after his ancestor, its founder, the Irish comedian, Sam Collins—could never be called a magnate. Slow and sure was his motto. He had an eye on every twopen'orth of ale consumed in the bars, while madam sat observantly in her box, to ensure that the serio-comic singers were sufficiently skirted and that they never outraged propriety in their songs. Sprake left upwards of £50,000. All the old-time circus proprietors left large fortunes. The Astleys, the Battys, the Henglers and the Ginnetts approached their hundred thousand, though their finance was elementary, as revealed by "Lord" George Sanger when an unfortunate company flotation subjected him to cross-examination. He "paid in" to one trouser pocket and "paid out" of the other. He bought back his circus from the shareholders and pulled it together again. He left about £30,000, as compared with £40,000 left by his brother, who predeceased him.

CHAPTER XXX

EVERLASTING FLOWERS

Too many Cooks !—Three Generations of Cowell—A Royal Romance—
Extinct Celebrity—The Emerys and the Farrens—"Lay" Parents

SALA, I think, spoke of himself as a "distressed compiler." I wonder why distressed. Compilation and compilations have a horrid fascination. Have you ever opened, say, *Brewer's Handbook of Phrase and Fable*, and turned from page to page till the dreadful bell of the Reading Room bade you homeward ere delicious divagations had let you get near the original object of your search? I had rather be imprisoned with the London Directory than with *Sir Charles Grandison*.

And the compiler! When I consider the exhilarating excursions my friend Bulloch has enjoyed in accumulating his genealogies of the stage, I am possessed by envy. Think of tracing the Cookes to their fountain-head, probably the tight-rope dancer at Astley's, and of linking them up, right and left, with the Rignolds and the Belmores. When I was a youngster there was a dear old lady living in a remote Warwickshire village to whom there came each Sunday morning a belated *Era*. The rest of the day was devoted by a young relative to reading what used to be called the Actors' Bible to the dame, from title-page to imprint. She was

the mother of the Rignolds—handsome William, who in his old age was led forth like Samson, white-haired and blind, to thank the friends who had gathered round him at the most pathetic benefit ever known; handsome George, who used to tour the country as “Henry Fifth, with his famous white horse, Crispin.” Her nephew, a richly unctuous comedian, Lionel Rignold, died quite recently. There are, I doubt not, still a dozen Rignolds on the stage.

There was a Cooke of a perfectly Biblical benevolence to Mr Bulloch, for he left wellnigh twenty children. I expect J. M. B. took fright if ever he tackled the Jeess. They do say that if you raise the canvas of any circus the world over and cry Jee, someone will respond. They are such elusive rascals these Jeess. I remember a Jee who was the very Musical Blacksmith—when he beat upon his anvil tunes rang out; if you dug him in the ribs he warbled. There was a very clean-cut and graceful tight-rope dancer by the name of Jee. Those amazing fellows, the Musical Dustmen, are Jeess. The Burnell troupe of pantomimists are Jeess.

Mr Bulloch’s tables keep the playgoer young. Are you disposed to think that the stage is in a bad way? See, then, how its genius is for ever renewing. Are you the weary and the wearisome *laudator temporis acti*? How much better it is to join yourself with the enthusiasm of the boy who “would be a rider, as his father was.”

For me, since my first pantomime, more than fifty years ago, I have gone to the theatre as many

as six nights in the week. Grant even that ninety-nine out of a hundred plays have qualities of boredom, the hundredth will repay the true lover of the theatre to the full, and never so generously as when he is welcoming some youngster to his inheritance, or hers.

In some respects the Haymarket is the most interesting of the London theatres. What a text for reminiscence it provided the other day, in the instance of *The Young Person in Pink*, and then again in *Mary Rose*. Donald Calthrop ventured the first-named play. He is one son of "Jack" Clayton, the unforgettable Hugh Trevor of *All for Her* and the first Henry Beauclerc of *Diplomacy*. His brother is that graceful writer, Dion Calthrop Clayton. Their mother was a Boucicault.

The "young person" herself was Miss Joyce Carey, in voice, in person and in method an exact renewal of her mother, Miss Lilian Braithwaite. But most wonderful of all is Miss Sydney Fairbrother, whose bibulous wardrobe dealer was declared to be an incarnation of a Dickens character. Well, Miss Sydney Fairbrother's grandfather was a contemporary of Dickens and a notable illustrator, on the stage, of his works. Miss Sydney Fairbrother takes her name from that famous English dancer whose marriage to the Duke of Cambridge was one of the clean romances of royalty. She is the daughter of an actor and of an actress, Mrs A. B. Tapping, an incomparable "old woman" to-day, as she was everything in her graceful progress through the ages. Mario leant on the little girl's

shoulder and wept when his voice first failed him in Dublin and the gallery was brutal in resentment. "I'm done, Tiny, I'm done," he moaned. And Mrs Tapping was once Florence Cowell, daughter of the arch-vocal comedian of the variety stage, the incomparable Artful Dodger.

Mary Rose, in the person of Miss Fay Compton, goes backward through two families of celebrity on the stage, her mother being the youngest of the Bateman sisters, to the Kembles. Mr Robert Loraine is the son of a fine old actor, whose memory reverted to circuit days and who had "supported" Macready and Helen Faucit. Not long before his death he told me a characteristic story of Macready, with whom he was to play Macduff. In his hotel the great man impulsively suggested a rehearsal of the fight, flinging Loraine an umbrella, but himself selecting the poker. The elder Loraine was playing Iago with G. V. Brooke when a sailor clambered from the pit to the stage and confidentially advised Othello to beware of "that pirate craft."

Ben Webster, that perennial *jeune premier*, is the son of a solicitor, but the grandson of fine old Ben Webster. Two girls took naturally to the stage and married actors.

One of my earliest memories in the way of journalism was the funeral of Charles Calvert, whose death made a most profound impression in Manchester. His Shakespearean revivals there coming between those of Charles Kean and Henry Irving avoided the pedantry of the former and inspired the latter. Calvert, a small, swarthy man, was, old Manchester

men have told me, an inspired actor. His widow is a wonderful instance, at eighty-three, of longevity on the stage. She played with the Keans in childhood. Her father, James Biddles, was the manager of the Bower Saloon, at Lambeth. The Calverts gave five sons to the stage, of whom Louis has lately written a quite remarkable book on the *Problems of the Actor*. He is just now associated in *Macbeth* with Mr James K. Hackett, who lately renewed with the younger Macreadys the friendship of their famous fathers.

The Brougs came of a literary family. It gave the stage two brilliant comedians, in Fanny Brough and her uncle Lionel, whose sons seemed likely to carry on his great work. But death took a heavy toll. Still with us is Miss Mary Brough, old Lionel's faithful companion.

Drury Lane's latest principal boy, winsome Marie Blanche, takes her name from her mother, one of the famous Blanche family, the children of Cicely Nott, a once popular favourite in *opéra bouffe*, and of that experienced owner and music hall manager, Sam Adams. Rosie Blanche was the wife of Robert Courtneidge, and his effective business partner. Their children, Cicely and Charles, are both artists of consequence now, and the baby Rosalind is of a determination to follow in their footsteps.

Some of the most famous names on the stage are now but names—Garrick's, for instance. There was a passable Rosalind, who claimed descent from our "Grande Sarah," as Mrs Scott Siddons.

The name of Macready—so passionately devoted to his domesticity and so heavily bereaved—is famous now in public life. But Macready hated the theatre in his heart. Phelps was not happy in his children, though a dear lady, Phelps by marriage, is remembered still. She was one of the fixtures of the George Edwardes household. Old Harry, or “Beetle,” Kemble had a clear claim to his name. His father was a soldier. His love of the theatre, to which he proceeded from the Civil Service, was encouraged in the house of his aunt, the beautiful Fanny Kemble.

From the eighteenth century, through four generations, there has been a William Farren, transmitting the title of an “Old” Farren to a young Farren. The William Farren of to-day had a boy with no predilection for the stage, likely, it seemed, to distinguish himself in science. He fell in the war. Nellie Farren’s son, Joseph, known as Farren Soutar, is the last representative of his family that I know of. Still further back go the Emerys. But it is understood that Miss Winifred Emery’s daughter, Margery Maude, definitely retired from the stage on her marriage.

En revanche, many of the popular favourites of this generation made for the stage in sheer perversity and in defiance of family tradition. Bancroft’s father was a gentleman of independent means. To be sure, Lady Bancroft’s parents were on the stage. Hare was a student for the Civil Service when a success as an amateur actor turned his thoughts to the stage. Wyndham’s father was a

kind of medical practitioner. Toole's was the City Toastmaster; Tree's a corn merchant; Alexander's a tradesman; Hawtrey's a schoolmaster; Bouchier's a soldier and a city man; Forbes Robertson's an art critic. Of these, Irving and Tree have given children to the stage, though the remaining Irving, Harry Irving's son, Laurence, has chosen another career. Hare's son, Gilbert, is alternatively a doctor and an actor. Young Bancroft acted a little and then preferred to cultivate dramatic authorship. His marriage with Miss Effie Hare was lately responsible for making Sir John and Sir Squire great-grandfathers.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE PASSING OF THE MUSIC HALL

Sale of the Empire—Its History—The Pernicious Promenade—Memories of the Middlesex—William Tell's Bad Shot—Vesta Tilley's Farewell—Some Male Impersonators

RECENTLY the directors of the two great music hall enterprises conducted competitions in the search for so styled "talent," particularly of the quality of the red-nosed comedian. I denied myself the pleasure of assistance—and my course proved wise. No genius was disclosed; not even mediocrity of promise. Most of the aspirants, I am told, were slavish plagiarists of well-known types—as Robey, Dunville, Harry Freeman, George Lashwood. They might have chanted *Morituri te Salutant* as they approached. The return was a cortège of slain hopes.

Everywhere the memories of the Victorian music hall are fading. As I write, the shareholders in the Empire are completing the sale of thier historic theatre for use as a picture house. Vesta Tilley definitely merged her personality into that of Lady de Freece at the most impressive function I recall in the history of the variety theatre, the other day. "Jimmy" Graydon lived to see the Old Mogul become a fashionable theatre, then died. Each event had a really deep significance for the student of the

variety theatre—indeed might form the text of an essential chapter in its history.

First, the Mogul. Not for me now to trace its history to the source often claimed for it—a pleasant tavern in the days of Charles II., where Nell Gwynn may have quenched her thirst. If, in fact, one seeks the oldest continuing music hall licence, I believe the claim must be allowed to the Standard, Pimlico, now the Victoria Palace. But in the sixties the Great Mogul Tavern developed a singing-room into a music hall; and eventually there was a kind of partition between the Middlesex Music Hall and its parent public-house, as in the case of a dozen other variety theatres—notably the Pavilion, the Oxford, the Royal Holborn, the Metropolitan and Collins's. In none of these instances was there an absorption of the earlier structure; nor, in the cases of the Grand Theatre, Islington, or the Britannia or the East London. This affiliation with an inn is one of the oldest traditions of the English variety theatre. You may draw a fantastic parallel between the galleried yard of Shakespeare and the Criterion, the old Gaiety—not to drag in His Majesty's and the Carlton—if you like. Under Graydon, in the seventies and eighties, the Middlesex was a typical old-style music hall. It clung to the tradition of the chairman, around whose table you might find young medicos from the neighbouring King's College Hospital. A famous Harley Street practitioner not so long since sat into the small hours with me, joyously recalling such experiences.

Graydon, on the other hand, was furious when George Sims spoke of the earlier musical hall proprietors as originally potmen. But, in fact, they were. The wonder is they did so well—for themselves, and for the art of variety. Graydon had an odd weakness for speaking of his early employment as that of “secretary” to another celebrity of the variety stage, Weston, of the Royal Holborn. Actually, he was Weston’s cellarman, but a worthy creature, an honourable man of business, a shrewd judge of what was technically called “talent.” Almost every celebrity of the variety stage appeared at the Old Mo’. But, strangely enough, none was “discovered” there. It was a kind of intermediate school. It claims Dan Leno’s London debut. Not so! But when Leno had just been remarked by the agents as a youngster of promise he got a joint engagement, at the Mogul, and at the vanished Deacons’, a stone’s-throw from Sadler’s Wells Theatre. The Mogul was again and again the battle-ground of the sketch, and but for Graydon’s persistence it is probable that the music halls would not enjoy, as they do now—by tolerance, not even yet by statutory right—the blessed privilege of playing short comic and serious dramas.

One of the few fatal accidents in music halls occurred at the Middlesex, when the girl carrying the apple on her forehead in a William Tell act was shot. In such exhibitions there is usually trickery—not that the performer cannot, by sheer skill, extinguish candles, or lift weights as advertised.

In practice, the candles are extinguished for him, just to make sure; the weights are diminished to save his strength. When Graydon relinquished the actual control of the Middlesex, and the Stoll group acquired a controlling interest, a series of revues by one of the lower grade Parisian companies was done, and had a certain vogue. "Habitué" of the Old Mogul had a curious sensation as they saw scantily dressed French beauties marching a "joy plank" across its once sanded floor to its once impeccably virtuous stage. When the Mogul was taken over in the Grossmith and Laurillard interest, and turned into a smart theatre, not less than £70,000 changed hands, and a vast sum was spent on its reconstruction and beautification. I suppose its capital value stands at ten times that of five and twenty years ago. Moreover, the most typical music hall of the day has been obliterated. And here is the Empire by way of being sold for nearly half a million, and likely to be turned into a picture house to which your nursery governess may take the children. There comes a time in a man's life, according to De Murger's Bohemian, when he should "range" himself. So with theatres. There is, indeed, a certain fitness in the Empire becoming a picture palace, for, after a tentative season at the Polytechnic, the first cinema exhibition was given at the Empire, in the afternoon, then as a conspicuously modest feature of the evening programme.

No need to be reticent about the Empire now. It was never *virginibus puerisque*. Still, public opinion

was complacent, and, in the nineties, declined to listen to the exhortations of Mrs Chant and her companions, but heartily endorsed Clement Scott's denunciation in *The Daily Telegraph* of "Prudes on the Prowl." Half-hearted authority sought to mitigate the offence of the promenade by enclosing the bars with Moorish fretwork. Young bloods tore down the partitions, and with a potential Prime Minister of to-day at their head marched down Piccadilly, brandishing fragments. The manager of the Empire in those days took a careful census of the demi-monde, by way of proving the sparsity of its inhabitants, and could never be induced to see the damning humour of the proceeding.

When, in 1916, the promenade was abolished there was no outcry, except from the Bishop of London, who proclaimed a triumph that was not really his. Public opinion had spontaneously improved. The sultanas had, in sheer weariness, ceased their ambulation. Sir John M'Dougall, whose name became a silly synonym for hypocrisy, is dead ; but Mrs Chant, in some rural retreat, may hear of the end of the old Empire. They were well-meaning, estimable people, of broader view by far than their critics allowed. They made the common error of such reformers in marshalling exaggerated hearsay as indefeasible evidence.

Of course the Empire is much younger than its neighbour and competitor, the Alhambra—the latter is upwards of fifty years old, the former fewer than forty. The historian of Leicester Square finds himself wandering on Lammas land in an

incredibly short time. But when building began on the north side of the square a tenantry of memorials supremely interesting to the lover of London crowded in. The Empire stands almost on the site of the town house of the Earls of Leicester. It had a spacious courtyard in front, and, at the back, a more spacious garden. In the course of time it was the residence apportioned to distinguished foreigners visiting London. Here lived the pathetic Winter Queen, Elizabeth of Bohemia. Here Peter the Great may have drunk his favourite mixture of pepper and brandy. Here George II. set up his Court, as Prince of Wales, having quarrelled with his father; and Frederick, the later Prince of Wales, did just the same thing. So it was called the "pouting-place of princes." Next door was Saville House, eventually destroyed by the Gordon Rioters, and from the steps of Saville House, in the circumstances set out above, George III. was proclaimed King. Great is the temptation to wander southward o'er the square, swept by Baron Grant and garnished with Shakespeare and geraniums, to recall duels and distinguished residents, circuses, *poses-plastiques*, judge and jury shows, and what not. But indeed you might write a volume about the fifty yards or so from Stagg & Mantle's corner, where Miss Linwood exhibited the old masters weirdly done in worsted, to the little French church, once a panorama, where one of our most popular comedians was, not so long since, received into the ancient faith.

A wonderful museum of many thousand objects

was accumulated in Leicester House toward the end of the eighteenth century by Sir Ashton Lever as the Holuphiskon, and dissipated by public lottery. On or around the site now occupied by the Empire, in the sixties, shows of every kind, that might have agglomerated into a Bardelmy Fair, from "anatomical" monstrosities to negro minstrelsy, ensued. The finish was an Eldorado Music Hall, burned to the ground, in spite of the efforts of King Edward VII., then, of course, Prince of Wales, and his vivacious friend, the Duke of Sutherland, who drove up on a fire engine and pumped away. On the site cleared by the fire a huge panorama was built—its lines may still be traced in the structure of the theatre into which it was transformed—as the Alcazar, as the Pandora, eventually as the Empire, opened on 17th April 1884, with *Chilperic*.

Neither this nor a succeeding Gaiety burlesque proved profitable, and in 1887 the blessed privilege of a licence for music and dancing was secured. The entertainment consisted of two ballets of magnitude and magnificence, and of a perfectly conventional variety show by Dan Leno, Arthur Roberts and the like. To this a proportion of the audience paid serious attention. But the world-famous characteristic of the Empire was the promenade, with its cosmopolitan crowd—and an unmoral, an unobtrusive-immoral, element. As these diminished the prosperity of the Empire diminished, though it should always be remembered in explanation of the once enormous-seeming

dividends, in the neighbourhood of 60 per cent., that they were paid on a ridiculously small capital. Writing without reference books available, I should say that the paid-up share capital of those days was about £30,000, the debenture issue about equal in amount, and the receipts in the neighbourhood of £100,000 a year.

Genée, for years the great asset of the Empire, got about £30 a week. To-day she would command from ten to twenty times that salary. On the other hand, as much as £10,000 would be spent on the production of a ballet. In the course of time the Empire tried revue, and eventually returned to its first form of entertainment, extravaganza and opera. But all this is common knowledge.

That Vesta Tilley on her retirement can boast of fifty years' continuous work on the variety stage seems almost incredible. The explanation is that she was a popular performer when ordinary urchins are the prisoners of the nursery. Her extraordinary vivacity and youthfulness were the astonishing characteristics even of her last performance.

I cannot make a genealogical tree for the "male impersonator." I think that Ella Wesner, an American girl, who visited England in the seventies, was one of the first. She used to sing an advertising song :

" The Richmond Gem,
The Richmond Gem,
Wherever I go,
I always smoke them."

She had a successor, a compatriot, Zelma Rawlston. Vesta Tilley had a contemporary, Bessie Bonehill, and a once potential rival, who married, and retired, and declined to become a wonderful representative of, say, Frau Potash—Millie Hylton. But when Vesta Tilley found herself, say thirty years ago, she never dreamed of yesterday. Her curious facility for wearing men's clothes was due to the fact that she did wear men's clothes, got from the best outfitters for men, and worn as a man might—no corsets, made ties, and high-heeled boots, which betrayed so many of her rivals, but the real thing right through. She actually set men's fashions. Moreover, she had an extraordinary capacity for living in her costume. Some sixth sense of insight, some supersimian power of mimicry, made her indeed Algy, and Tommy, and who not? If you want to measure the height and the depth of Tilley worship, you must go to Birmingham, which had watched her beginnings, knew the loyalty and sweetness of her home life, her charities. She was born hard by and had family ties with the city. Her father, a curious old "character," was a clown, by name Powles. Tilley was christened Matilda, and assumed the style of Vesta from a match-box. Odd, because the name of Vesta Tilley seems to have an inseparable fitness. Old Powles was chairman of a Nottingham sing-song, grandiosely called St George's Hall. For years the "Great Little Tilley," of whom pictures are extant as the infant Sims Reeves, with a moustache that seemed too large for her little body, endured all the vicissitudes

of music hall life. Not only are its memories vivid—its comrades are not forgotten. In surroundings that reeked of beer and tobacco; in dressing-rooms where the talk was no cleaner than the atmosphere; in poor lodgings and in “palaces” where putrid songs were specifically demanded by swine-eyed proprietors, she grew as sweetly and as strangely as the prison flower. And now her work is done.

What is the future of the music hall? I fear—if fear should be the word—it has none. I loved it. I love to babble of it, as the old lady fondled her memory of sin. I look at a Pavilion programme, with its twenty alternations of lions “comique,” or “serios,” and acrobats—no “sketch,” no interlude of classic music, nothing more elevating than *The Lost Chord* on a cornet. I wonder if it could obsess me again? When Ralph Neville reads this heresy he will fling my poor book into the hearth. Randall Charlton will weep. Willoughby Maycock will pause in his generous and infallible addenda to admit there is something in what I say. *Eheu fugaces!* The flight, at any rate, is a fact.

A somewhat earlier retirement from the scene was that of Charles Coborn, whose farewell benefit was approved by the Bishops of Willesden and of Winchester. Two Bishops—and *Two Lovely Black Eyes*. Can you imagine a more curious citation?

Coborn typified the music hall singer in the respect that he began in most humble circumstances somewhat short of fifty years ago, and rose to fame untaught, unaided. He did not typify the music hall

singer in the respect that his songs were always clean; he was careful in the finesse of his art, passionate in his claim for the dignity of his calling.

He came of dour Scotch parents, and abandoned "the city" in his teens to try his luck as an "artiste" for a few shillings a week in the singing-rooms then attached to hundreds of public-houses in London and the provinces. He made his first success with *Here's Another Kind Love*, a ditty such as the soul of the music hall habitu   loved. He made his first important appearance at the Middlesex, the playground of many a music hall celebrity, and most respectable of its common kind. The old building, fumed with ale, sawdust and tobacco, is now a luxurious theatre. By singing *Our 'Armonic Club* Coborn got Chevalier's ditties a vogue in "the halls," and possibly suggested to the actor poet his apostolic trip to the variety stage. Coborn tried Kipling's ballads too, but without remarkable success. *Two Lovely Black Eyes*, first sung in the provinces, came to West End ears through the Trocadero, long since absorbed in the restaurant of that name. The history and style of this hall epitomise the history and stereotype the style of what, when all is said and done, is—or was—the most characteristic form of English entertainment. The Trocadero was transformed from the Argyll Rooms, and the Argyll Rooms has been, not quite correctly, identified with a Georgian haunt called Laurent's Casino. In the seventies the Argyll Rooms was as a modern night club, without its perfunctory con-

dition of election to membership. You just bought a ticket and went in—to mix with the *demi-reps* and the *demi-mondaines* who danced and drank till morning, to the accumulation of a vast fortune for its last proprietor, one Bignell. Several times he was threatened with the loss of his licence, and at last it went. The golden youth contemplated a lusty last night, but there was no last night. As the hour for the function approached the police formed a cordon round Windmill Street and drove back the angry roisterers.

For a long time Bignell sulked in his tent, and then he had the brilliant idea of turning the Argyll Rooms into the Trocadero Music Hall. The bar was as large as the hall, from which it was only defined by arches. It was not uncommon for champagne to be ordered by the dozen. Once I saw a fight between the pugilistic bodyguard of the late Mr “Abingdon” Baird and others of a rival *noceur*. Twenty police instantly filed in, for the incident was expected. In spite of all its privileges of tradition, situation and circumstance, the Trocadero only flourished while Coborn sang *Two Lovely Black Eyes*. It was his own conceived and executed parody of a silly Christy Minstrel song, *My Nellie’s Blue Eyes*. He was engaged at the Trocadero as an emergency “turn” at five pounds a week, and he was retained two years at eventually ten pounds a week under a contract. “Jimmie” Davis, otherwise Owen Hall, who claimed, with some excuse, to be the inventor of musical comedy, wrote a eulogy of *Two Lovely Black Eyes* in his smart, scandalous paper, *The Bat*, and

soon fashionable London, dull peers and the sultanas were fighting for admission.

Two Lovely Black Eyes pervaded the world. It has outlived the Trocadero. It will outlive the music hall. To few men are given two such successes. But Coborn soon followed with *Bill Sloggins* :

“ . . . ‘Orl right when you know ‘im,
 But you’ve got to know ‘im fust.
 ‘Orl right when you know ‘im,
 But nasty when he’s vexed.
 ‘E’ll stand a pint one minute, and
 ‘E’ll black your eye the next.”

Then came *The Man that Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo*, of which Coborn bought the performing rights for a guinea. At the outset its acceptance was so grudging that the author and composer, Fred Gilbert, gladly disposed of all rights, publication and what not for ten pounds. Could a success such as that of *Two Lovely Black Eyes* be reasonably looked for to-day, Coborn might command not five but possibly five hundred pounds a week. Could a song achieve such a success as that of *Monte Carlo*, it might make ten thousand pounds. “. . . Pity them both ! Pity us all—who vainly the acts of our youth recall.”

And, again, a landmark of the music hall disappeared in John Read, whose death, at the ripe age of eighty-seven, removed probably the last of the chairmen. A chance reference to him not long before his death brought a cheery letter from the veteran, declaring that he was still hale and hearty, playing Darby to the Joan of his wife, a once well-

known "serio-comic singer," who survived him. Read was for many years master of the ceremonies at Collins's Music Hall, Islington. His office was abolished long ago. The last chairman, at anyrate in the London area, was a venerable gentleman, Walter Lever by name, who retired from the Royal Albert Music Hall in Canning Town nearing his eighties, after little less than half-a-century of public service. By day he was a skilled mechanic, and proudly possessed a letter from King Edward VII. recording his worth. He went to school with Arthur Orton, and was a damning witness against the claimant.

The chairman was the last link between the modern music hall and its forerunners, the song and supper room and the "free and easy." In the first case mine host himself occupied the chair, and encouraged his guests to wine and song—at Evans's, Paddy Green, who had been himself a chorister; at the Coal Hole, a great favourite of the literary and theatrical celebrities of the day, John Rhodes, whose hospitable board groaned beneath a weight of solid silver tankards. In the course of time the Coal Hole became the Occidental Tavern, a great haunt of needy actors, who were allowed generous credit; and then the famous old hostelry became Terry's Theatre.

When Morton remodelled the Canterbury he could not do without the chairman; one John Caulfield, who eventually accompanied Morton to the Oxford, an old actor from the Haymarket, officiated—Madame Caulfield was the first serio-comic singer.

Of their children, a son married the Alhambra favourite, Constance Loseby, and a daughter was the ill-fated Lennox Grey, one of the sweetest exponents of early comic opera. Caulfield was a versatile genius—musical, histrionic, literary. He wrote Sam Cowell's *Faust* song and kept it up to date with topical verses of a notably daring character.

John Read was a fertile writer of songs, of which he was an effective exponent. Probably the best known ran :

"Sitting by the fireside, smoking my long clay,
That is how I like to pass a winter night away,
A glass of grog, a flaming log, that blazes now and then,
Upon my word, I do declare, I'm the happiest of men."

Strange as it may seem, he could link up with Canterbury, with Cowell and Caulfield; for a popular member of the company there was Sam Collins, who stands for the type of the stage Irishman. No music hall programme, and indeed no stock company, was complete without its Irish comedian, conventional, cap-à-pied—from the caubeen on his head to the brogues on his feet, green coat of the pattern we call a dress coat now, drab cord breeches, worsted stockings and shillelagh. Collins probably modelled himself on George Hodson, whose father wrote *Tell me, Mary, how to Woo Thee*, and somewhere managed the Bower Saloon, and whose daughters became celebrated actresses as Kate Hodson and Henrietta Hodson—Mrs Henry Labouchere, of the sharp tongue. The last of the Irish comedians was Pat Feeney, a real genius, and Irish body and soul.

Sam Collins used to sing *The Rocky Road to Dublin*, but I doubt if he ever trod it. He was a London chimney-sweep, by name Vagg, and he used to carry his wardrobe in a bundle slung over his shoulder at the end of a shillelagh—so, tramp miles from “turn” to “turn,” his pay, at the outset, being three half-crowns a show and a hot drink. But he saved money, bought the Lansdowne Arms, Islington Green, and turned it into a music hall, which eventually changed hands for £50,000. He was a good fellow, as his epitaph testifies :

“Farewell, honest-hearted Sam,
Until we meet before the great I Am.”

Harry Sydney, the topical vocalist, was the author of this priceless gem.

Not far from Collins's was a hall known as Deacons', swept away by Rosebery Avenue. The chairmanship of Deacons' indirectly shaped the course of music halls and musical comedy. There were two competitors for the job, contributors to the current programme. Fred Williams thought his fortune was made when he secured the post at five pounds a week. His bitterly disappointed rival kept on comic singing—being Arthur Roberts—and was soon drawing all London to the Oxford Music Hall.

And, again, a chairman exercised a remarkable influence on the commerce of the variety stage—Harry Fox, chairman for many years of the Middlesex, or the “Old Mogul.” Fox it was who encouraged professionals to look in on him on Sunday

night, negotiated engagements for them, and acted as clerk of the agreement—for, in truth, they were an illiterate lot.

If Fox were the father of music hall agency, which meanwhile has yielded incomes ranging to ten thousand a year to some very curious gentry, he was not, as I saw stated the other day, the father of Rose Fox, the Gaiety skipping-rope dancer—which, by the way, would make him the grandfather of Maude Darrell. The founder of that family was a North Country man.

The vastness of the South London Music Hall suggested the removal of the chairman's seat to the centre of the hall, where the gallery boy "chi-iked" him with an incessant chorus of "Bob, Bob, Bob." His name was Robert Courtney—Baron Courtney, if you please. I suppose the title was imitated from "Baron" Nicholson, the chairman of the infamous "Judge and Jury." Courtney blazed diamonds, but died in abject poverty. Another chairman typified the vicissitudes of variety. W. B. Fair was chairman of various halls. He became famous as the singer of Lonsdale's *Tommy, make Room for your Uncle*, which had a run of ten years. Robert Browning protested against the maddening strains:

"Treading down rose and ranunculus,
You, 'Tommy, make room for your uncle us,'
Troop, all of you—man or homunculus."

Fair invested his fortune badly, and shortly before his death was a linkman at the London Coliseum.

Naturally, the Pavilion, built over the stable-yard of an inn, from which you were entitled to draw an

allowance of liquor as part of the contract expressed on your ticket of admission, had its chairman. Well remembered by *viveurs* in the seventies was Harry Cavendish, who, like most of his kind, joined the vocation of "buffo vocalist" to that of chairman, and readily obliged with *The Village Blacksmith* if an artist should fail or be late. The chairman lingered in the provinces long after London had no further use for him. Probably the last to go was he of Chatham.

Revue, so called, was the requiem of variety. Revue might have given it new life. Revue is, of course, a very definite form of art, and, exact in circumstance and detail, can hardly be transplanted to our soil. The attempt was first made, many years ago, by the precocious genius of Seymour Hicks, abetted by the matured cynicism of Charles Brookfield, in *Under the Clock*, at the Court Theatre. It was made again at the Coliseum, when that costly structure first slid out into deep water to capsize and sink—but what a salvage! Then the Alhambra, the Hippodrome, the Empire, the London Hippodrome were given over to scabrous splendours, largely of American origin, called revues, absolutely unlike their French namesake, just as the music halls were filled up with the precipitated baseness of pantomime—the puns, the "unprincipalled" boy, the soppy-sentimental heroine, the obtrusive, inane comedians, the second-hand clothes and shabby scenery. Mostly these were "run" by that thing of ineptitude and cupidity the music hall agent, short of his habitual prey.

Plays and ballets encroached upon the programmes of the more important music halls. The others found themselves depleted of the acrobats, who were mostly Germans, summoned to military service, and of the Americans who cried "Me for home!" when the first maroon sounded. There were left the artists most characteristic of the music hall—English artists, usually uneducated, in letters and in the art of entertaining; picking their way diffidently to public failure as an inefficient pianist feels for a tune with one finger; fatally apt to stereotype a single success. The curse of the music hall has always been proprietors without inspiration, eye on dividends; stage direction without suggestion or discipline; artists reliant on a thumb-rule improvisation. The revue, which was not a revue, seemed to be an opportunity of supplying the music hall with an artistic medium; of giving the entertainment homogeneousness—I have seen Cleopatra lean on a Piccadilly lamp-post to sing of the Nile; of tutoring the ignorance and stimulating the genius whose birthplace may have been a casual ward. But no! The music hall artist, good enough for the theatre, is taking that incentive. The music hall proprietor chews his cigar from one corner of his mouth to the other, and spits contentedly. When the last *God Save the King* has been played in his "hall" he can doubtless make another fortune by surrendering it to "the pictures." The Victorian music hall, whether you come to bury it or to praise it, is as dead as Cæsar.

CHAPTER XXXII

CONCERNING GILBERT AND SULLIVAN

A Wonderful Revival—Gilbert and Sullivan's First Collaboration—A Gaiety Burlesque—*Trial by Jury*—The Savoy—Choosing the Company—A Quarrel and a Reconciliation

IN an earlier chapter I spoke of Gilbert and Sullivan opera as having been a dead letter in London for twenty years, and disputed the belief encouraged by what in America they would call the Gilbert and Sullivan "fans" that the first coming of the brilliant pair scattered the professors of *opéra bouffe* as chaff before the wind. Both statements should be qualified. Truly enough, the Savoy was never quite the same after the quarrel of the parties to its fame. No attempt to replace Gilbert and Sullivan really succeeded. Their reconciliation was just an experiment with poor cement. For some time from 1903 the Savoy was closed, and thereafter devoted to other uses. But it is the proud boast of Savoy opera that from the time it had a habitation and a name, not a working day has passed without a performance somewhere, in England or abroad. Moreover, hardly any attempt to revive an *opéra bouffe*, however popular in its day, has been even moderately successful. So Gilbert and Sullivan laugh last.

In the autumn of 1919 a wonderful thing happened. During eighteen weeks almost every Gilbert and

Sullivan opera was played at the Prince's Theatre. Indeed the only omissions were those of *Ruddigore*, which, in fact, was the least successful of the earlier Savoy productions; of *Utopia*, the seal of the ineffectual reunion of Gilbert and Sullivan in the autumn of 1893, after a quarrel that was conveniently concentrated on a carpet, but had, in fact, been long in the brewing; and of *The Grand Duke*, with which the second partnership came to an end—death from inanition.

Probably the two men were never personally sympathetic to the degree that their public association seemed to indicate. Sullivan was an incorrigibly indolent, pleasure-loving Bohemian to the end. Gilbert, as he prospered exceedingly, fell easily into the rôle of the country gentleman and county magistrate, somewhat cantankerous, though there was a sweeter side to his nature, and he was capable of generous deeds. A considerable moiety of his large fortune comes eventually into the treasury of theatrical charities.

Ruddigore was a really delightful burlesque on the old school of melodrama—perhaps already *vieu jeu*. A certain section of the public found the title revolting, and Gilbert, in a characteristic mood of sarcastic humour, suggested its change to the insignificant *Kensington Gore*. It was Sullivan who stood firm. The burlesque was itself burlesqued—butter on bacon—as *Ruddy George*, at Toole's Theatre. And it gave rise to a situation more absurd than any it contained. For many years the correspondent in London of the Paris *Figaro* was a very

French old gentleman with the most English name of Johnson, in style and sentiment a kind of Brixton Road Blowitz. And M. Johnson took deep offence on account of Richard's song about a short sharp sea battle :

"Then our captain he up and he says, says he :

'That chap we need not fear—

We can take her if we like,

She's sartin for to strike,

For she's only a darned Mounseer,

D'ye see ?

She's only a darned Mounseer !

"' But to fight a French fal-lal—it's like hitting of a gal—

It's a lubberly thing for to do ;

For we, with all our faults,

Why, we're sturdy British salts,

While she's only a Parley-voo,

D'ye see ?

A miserable Parley-voo ! ' "

M. Johnson sent cablegrams to his journal which graduated from an angry protest to a clear call to arms. But the authorities had not yet reached that stage of idiocy which made them later forbid the performance of *The Mikado* lest Japanese susceptibilities should be hurt !

It is the fact that two of the most shrewd and enterprising of the important London managers discussed the question of a revival of Gilbert and Sullivan opera at the West End, and dismissed it, in spite of the fact that long repertory seasons in Manchester and Birmingham might have shown them the trend of public desire.

In considering the material results achieved at the

Prince's, it should be remembered that the theatre has probably twice the holding capacity of the Savoy. The operas were sumptuously redressed, after new designs. There was a careful avoidance of "star-ring" any artist. There was, of course, no attempt to bring Gilbert "up to date." Not even his most topical allusions—to the extreme of "Captain Shaw: type of true love kept under"—were deleted. Many of them proved, indeed, of a perfectly prophetic appositeness. What was the result? An immediate £30,000 pouring into the box office for "advance booking" from applicants who often presented themselves whistling selections! Two splendid survivals of the old guard, Mr Rutland Barrington and Miss Jessie Bond, were quickly recognised in their boxes by an audience of which some members proudly claimed a record of every first night. Such a parade of affection was never known.

For all time the name of D'Oyly Carte will be associated with the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan—with a chapter of supreme and infinite importance in the history of the English stage. Richard D'Oyly Carte was the son of a maker of musical instruments; in early life a musical agent, shrewd, better educated than persons of that calling were, or are apt to be, himself a composer of no mean skill and charm, with an assistant sympathetic in all aspects in his secretary, Miss Helen Black, who became his wife, and who, in spite of a delicate constitution not spared in tireless and methodical industry, long outlived him. But D'Oyly Carte was not responsible

for the introduction of author and composer. A Gaiety burlesque produced in the early days of that theatre, on 21st December 1871, first bore the names of W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan as author and composer. It proved acceptable—long runs were not expected then—but seems to have appealed to no one as uncommon, though Gilbert in later life strenuously maintained that he never, in the stress of pot-boiling, fell into the ditch of careless rhyme and pernicious punning, as Byron did. Gilbert was Hollingshead’s first selection as an author for the Gaiety—he contributed a burlesque of *Robert the Devil* to the opening programme on 21st December 1868, with Toole in the cast; six months later a three-act comedy drama called *An Old Score*. Years passed ere the production of *Trial by Jury* at the Royalty Theatre, on 25th March 1875. Charles Morton has been described as the father of Gilbert and Sullivan opera. It is as terminologically inexact as to call him the father of the music hall. Carte was running a season of *opéra bouffe* at the Royalty with the erratic Selina, or “Dolly” Dolaro, for his leading lady. *Trial by Jury* was produced as an after-piece to *La Perichole*, in supersession of Charles Collette’s curiously entitled entertainment, *Cryptoconchoidsyphonostomata*, obviously suggested by Henry Carey’s *Chrononholongthologos*. I think the sole survivor of *Trial by Jury* is Miss Nellie Bromley, who, as Mrs Archibald Stuart Wortley, is still an interesting and interested attendant at first nights. She was a popular favourite in comic opera and burlesque in her day. Fred Sullivan, the learned

judge, was the composer's brother, a fine comedian, who went to America and died there. W. S. Penley was an eventual foreman of the jury, but not the first.

More than two years later, in the late autumn of 1877, the Opera Comique was opened under the direction of the Comedy Opera Company, one of the earliest "syndicates," which created a nine days' wonder by a free fight ere it dissolved. A simple partnership between Carte, Sullivan and Gilbert was the sequel. To *Pinafore* ensued *The Pirates of Penzance* and *Patience*. The last-named was on 10th October transferred to the Savoy, then regarded as the last word in theatre structure—flooded with what the descriptive writers still called the "new illuminant." A great name is curiously associated with *The Pirates of Penzance*. There was a mysterious first performance at Penzance to baffle the pirates of America, and the first Major-General Stanley was that erratic genius, Richard Mansfield, son of the once famous vocalist, Emma Rudersdorf. Mansfield was a grateful protégé of D'Oyly Carte and long a member of his companies—as Sir Joseph Porter and John Wellington Wells.

It was probably more than a coincidence that many of the early and most of the important exponents of Gilbert and Sullivan had been "entertainers." There was George Grossmith; there was Rutland Barrington, who, after a brief novitiate with Henry Neville, went to the Howard Pauls. There was Mrs Howard Paul herself. Jessie Bond was a concert vocalist. May not the explanation be

that Gilbert deliberately chose artists free from the traditions and tricks of the stage—plastic material he could mould with firm fingers? He is spoken of as an exigent, an autocratic stage manager. He insisted on his lines being spoken without omission or addition. He imparted “business” that was infrangibly stereotyped. But then his lines were, and are, unimprovable. And his knowledge of stage-craft was extensive and peculiar. Like so many of the settlers in “the beautiful city of Prague,” Jeff Prowse’s witty way of indicating London as the capital of Bohemia, Gilbert had been a barrister, bitterly reviled, as he humorously relates, by one of his first clients, and a Civil servant. He became a serious and comic journalist, illustrating his own articles with a pen that perceived a divided duty—he was so clever a draughtsman. He was a trenchant critic of the drama, a hack writer of pantomime and burlesque, the founder of a new school of fancy bred comedy, and the first of the “problem playwrights,” with Mrs Kendal for his “woman with a past” in *Charity*. He had practical experience of the stage—from harlequin in a pantomime to the associate in *Trial by Jury*, when it was done at the Nellie Farren benefit. It has always formed a useful vehicle on such occasions for introducing crowds of celebrities. Gilbert always used a miniature of the Savoy stage, with ingenious details, for his situations and colour schemes. He had given infinite pains to the study of *mise en scène*, and so long ago as the Haymarket days had sharp encounters with an opponent of such strong character as Mrs

.

Kendal. Hollingshead recalls that he usually got what he wanted at the Gaiety, adding that what he wanted was usually right. At the Savoy he had developed into the complete autocrat, though he maintained that he was always willing to listen to suggestion—less courageously tendered, no doubt, after an experience of the scathing retort at which he was an adept. A Rabelaisian quality has kept some of his best mots from printed record.

One of the traditions of the Savoy was the sedulous concealment of the name, the style and every interesting detail of a contemplated production until the first performance, or at anyrate until the *répétition général*, which was, I think, introduced to this country at the Savoy. Once, when the story of an opera leaked out—there are many men in Fleet Street who could tell now—Gilbert assembled the company and reproached all with the crime of one, whom he professed to be able to indicate. He magnanimously withheld the name of the “little cad; but it began with T.” Poor little Frank Thornton was desolated. But when he was soon cleared of all suspicion he had the courage to refuse Gilbert’s grudging and half-hearted withdrawal, and to insist on a second assembly of the company and an apology as unmistakable as the offence had been.

Arthur Sullivan’s early activity was addressed to the composition of oratorio, incidentally of music for *The Tempest*. He collaborated with Burnand in a musical version of *Box and Cox*; again in an operetta done by the German Reeds, entitled

Contrabandista. Of his eventual association with Gilbert the latter said :

“When Sullivan and I began to collaborate English comic opera had practically ceased to exist. Such musical entertainments as held the stage were adaptations of the plots of the operas of Offenbach, Audran and Lecocq. These plots had generally been Bowdlerised out of intelligibility ; and, when they had not been subjected to this treatment, they were frankly improper, whereas the ladies’ dresses suggested that the management had gone on the principle of doing a little and doing it well. Sullivan and I set out with the determination to prove that these elements were not essential to the success of humorous opera. We resolved that our plots, however ridiculous, should be coherent ; that the dialogue should be void of offence ; that, on artistic principles, no man should play a woman’s part and no woman a man’s. Finally we agreed that no lady of the company should be required to wear a dress she could not with absolute propriety wear at a fancy dress ball.”

CHAPTER XXXIII

POSTSCRIPT

Tom Thorne's Death—Actors as Horsemen—Story of *Two Roses*—
Irving's First Appearance—Good-bye to Cecil Clay

MECHANICAL difficulties, the saint-like patience of a publisher, an incorrigible habit of procrastination have kept these pages long in waiting. So the lapse of time permits some frank footnotes to the earlier chapters. Tom Thorne is dead. The painful circumstances might have warranted the secrecy of his relatives. But it was curiously decided to put the news in circulation twelve months after the event. Thorne was a hard, uncouth kind of actor, one of a large theatrical family, whose members took to the stage as a matter of course. Tom acted with Phelps. He was at his best, to my recollection, as Parson Adams; and, again, as the Methodist minister of Jones's *Saints and Sinners*. I bore a grudge against him, I own, for ruining, by sheer force of inappropriate personality, a profoundly interesting play of Haddon Chambers, *The Honourable Herbert*; no doubt, too, a little before its time. So was *Grierson's Way*. Odd that when, after twenty years, Mr Esmond carried out a cherished scheme of giving it a second chance it should be found old-fashioned by the young critic. The moral seems to be, let sleeping plays lie. Thorne's last *jeune premier* of note

was Leonard Boyne, whose recent death revealed something like his real age, as seventy-three. He was sensitive on the point, resenting even the sixty-seven years allowed him in the biographical records. Perhaps much exercise in the open air was responsible for his extraordinarily youthful appearance and temperament. Boyne was one of the last actors not afraid to act. He was a brilliant horseman—one of the very few who did not cut a ridiculous figure when he needed to mount a horse on the stage, as in *A Prodigal Daughter*. As a stage lover he was incomparable. Perhaps the leading ladies of his youth—the lovely, red-haired Mrs Rousby, the adorable Ada Cavendish—were responsible. He played Claudian with a moustache and a still more pronounced brogue. He defended both. When mischievously asked if there were Irish settlers in Ancient Rome, he asked defiantly: “An’ whoy not?”

Lady Wyndham is excogitating a revival of *Two Roses*, which, produced on 4th June 1870, established the uncertain fortunes of the Vaudeville, and was the one outstanding success of her first husband, James Albery, who became, however, well accustomed in the adaptation of French farces to the English stage. Albery, in the character of an exuberant first-nighter, once asked Ben Webster, towards the end of a tiresome play, if he was likely to be very long; but, on the other side of the footlights, reviled the audience that did not like his *Jacks and Jills* at the Vaudeville. But it was during Burnand’s *Headless Man* that Wyndham angrily objurgated a “man in a white

hat." When the audience dispersed a white hat was left on the ledge of the upper circle and not claimed. It was preserved as a relic at the Criterion for years—and may still be there. Albery wrote a sequel, *Two Thorns*, which had but a short run. Of *Two Roses* there have been half-a-dozen revivals. In this play Henry Irving, as Digby Grant, was allowed to "take rank among the very best actors on the London stage . . . the selfish arrogance, the stuck-up hauteur, the transparent hypocrisy, and the utter heartlessness of the character, made all the more odious by the assumption of sanctity, were depicted by Mr Irving with exquisite truthfulness of detail and admirable brilliancy and vigour of general effect. His make-up for the part was excellent; and his whole performance spirited, characteristic and life-like." Previously Irving had played Doricourt in *The Belle's Stratagem* at the St James's, Rawdon Scudamore in Boucicault's *Hunted Down*, Harry Dornton in *The Road to Ruin*, and Count Falcon in *Idalia*. At the Queen's Theatre he was Bob Gassitt in *Dearer than Life*, and in the first performance of *Formosa* at Drury Lane, on 5th August 1869, he played the villain, Compton Kerr.

But, in truth, Irving's absolutely unnoticed first appearance in London was at the Princess's Theatre, on 24th September 1859, in a play entitled *Ivy Hall*, adapted by John Oxenford from the French. The actor came up eager to begin a three years' engagement with Augustus Harris the first, to find that he had an utterly insignificant part to play, three lines to speak. Bitterly disappointed, he asked for, and



"DEARER THAN LIFE." QUEEN'S THEATRE, 1858

CHARLES WYNDHAM J. L. TOOLE, JOHN CLAYTON, LIONEL BROUGH, HENRY IRVING,
ADA DYAN, HENRIETTA HOUSON

obtained, his release, and returned to a weary round of the provinces. Much of his time was spent in Manchester, where Boucicault claimed to have "discovered" him.

Two Roses first appeared most suitably as a serial in *The Family Herald*. Of the three partners in the Vaudeville, James did not appear, though he eventually succeeded to the character of Our Mr Jenkins. Handsome Harry Montague played Jack Wyatt; Thorne was the blind Caleb Deecie; George Honey, the original Eccles, played Our Mr Jenkins. Honey was stricken by paralysis while playing Eccles in a revival of *Caste* and held up in the doorway of the scene till the curtain fell, the audience shrieking with laughter at his contorted face.

Of the *Two Roses*, Addie Newton became Mrs Thorne. It was not a happy union. Amy Fawsett went to America. She was found dead in sordid circumstances. Her husband, a veritable soldier of fortune, contracted two later marriages with popular favourites in burlesque. I do not believe there is a survivor of the original cast of *Two Roses*. Of Irving's Lyceum revival in 1881, Miss Winifred Emery is, of course, with us—but Terriss the Jack Wyatt, Alexander the Caleb Deecie, James the Mr Jenkins, and Helen Matthews the Ida are dead. Of the Criterion revival, Miss Annie Hughes, the Lotty, succeeded by Miss Ellaline Terriss, survives; and Mr George Giddons, the Caleb Deecie; but gone are William Farren the Digby Grant, Sydney Brough the Jack Wyatt, David James, Mrs Edmund Phelps, William Blakely and Maud Millett, the Ida.

Maud Millett was one of unnumbered thousands who died after years of suffering in secret, begun by an awful air raid experience. Returning to the stage after several years of retirement to domesticity, she was in fact a better actress in her middle age than she had been in her girlhood, as the adored but not specially accomplished incarnation of Pinero's "creamy English girl."

"Dear Cecil Clay. . . ." The words were hardly dry on a simple note of friendship when news came of his death. They are a sufficient epitaph. I suppose that Cecil Clay was never heard to say an unkind thing of man or woman. He would have begged himself in benefaction. Much might be written of his prowess in the playing fields, notably at cricket and at tennis, but that was before my time. He was an enthusiastic and brilliant card player, and somewhat of a racing man—ininitely beyond my ken. But as an assiduous first-nighter, a charming host, a delightful raconteur, I knew him well and loved him better. He took the keenest interest in the accumulation of these pages, and carefully revised the stories of his *Pantomime Rehearsal*, and of the Vokeses. He belonged to more clubs than any man I know. It was at the St James's that he gently reproached a fellow-member who complained of the matches. "You should thank God, my dear fellow, there is something left that 'will not strike.' " I saw it stated that *On the March* was his "last work for the stage." In truth, he never "worked" for the stage. He was the interested onlooker, the desultory adviser. Much of *A*

Pantomime Rehearsal was in the way of others' addenda—in the beginning, “Scrobbe” Ponsonby; at the end, Brandon Thomas. *On the March* was an amplification of a Vokeses sketch, *In Camp*, I think. It was tentatively produced at Sheffield, whither a pleasant picnic-party—Charley Stephenson, Clay, “Cricketer Bill” Yardley, Ned Saunders, whose chief concern was the meticulously careful composition of menus. He breakfasted with a sheet of foolscap before him, on which he made notes for lunch and dinner. Now all are “sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.”

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

FIFTY YEARS OF PANTOMIME AT DRURY LANE

1869–1870. *Beauty and the Beast*. By E. L. BLANCHARD.
Cast: Zerlina, Miss Jessie Vokes; Zemira, Miss Victoria Vokes; Fatima, Miss Rosina Vokes; Prince Agor, Mr Fred Vokes; Azalea, Miss Kate Santley; Lakmella, Miss Harriet Coveney.

[The Vokes family made their formal debut at the Lyceum in the pantomime of *Humpty Dumpty*, 1868–1869.]

1870–1871. *The Dragon of Wantley*. By E. L. BLANCHARD.
(His 21st pantomime.) *Cast*: Lady Joan, Miss Victoria Vokes; Miss Madge, Miss Rosina Vokes; Columbine, Miss Jessie Vokes; More of More Hall, Mr Fred Vokes; Jingo, Mr Fawdon Vokes; Mother Shipton, Miss Harriet Coveney.

1871–1872. *Tom Thumb*. By E. L. BLANCHARD. *Cast*: Sir Tristram, Miss Victoria Vokes; Sir Caradoc, Miss Rosina Vokes; Sir Lionel, Miss Jessie Vokes; King Arthur, Mr Fred Vokes; Dagonet, Mr Fawdon Vokes; Sir Lancelot, Miss Harriet Coveney.

[The Tom Thumb was a six-year-old Australian prodigy, John Manley.]

1872–1873. *The Children in the Wood*. By E. L. BLANCHARD.
Cast: Master Willie, Miss Victoria Vokes; Miss Mary, Miss Rosina Vokes; Miss Winifred, Miss Jessie Vokes;

Sir Roland, Mr Fred Vokes ; Geoffrey Nimblelegs, Mr Fawdon Vokes ; Queen Mab, Miss Violet Cameron ; Walter the Woodman, Miss Harriet Coveney.

1873-1874. *Jack in the Box*. By E. L. BLANCHARD. *Cast*: Goblina, Miss Kate Vaughan ; Little Bo-Peep, Miss Violet Cameron ; Prince Felix, Miss Harriet Coveney ; Prince Poppett, Miss Alma Murray.

[The Vokes family were on tour in America.]

1874-1875. *Aladdin*. By E. L. BLANCHARD. *Cast*: Aladdin, Miss Victoria Vokes ; Princess Badroulbador, Miss Rosina Vokes ; Genii of the Lamp, Miss Jessie Vokes ; Kazrac, Mr Fawdon Vokes ; Mother of Aladdin, Miss Harriet Coveney ; Genii of the Ring, Miss Clara Jecks.

1875-1876. *Whittington and his Cat*. By E. L. BLANCHARD. *Cast*: Dick, Miss Victoria Vokes ; Alice Fitzwarren, Miss Rosina Vokes ; the Fairy of the Dell, Miss Jessie Vokes ; Alderman Fitzwarren, Mr Fred Vokes ; Jimmie, Mr Fawdon Vokes ; the Cook, Miss Harriet Coveney.

1876-1877. *The Forty Thieves*. By E. L. BLANCHARD. *Cast*: Morgiana, Miss Victoria Vokes ; Ganem, Miss Rosina Vokes ; Abdalla, Miss Jessie Vokes ; Ali Baba, Mr Fred Vokes ; Hassarac, Mr Fawdon Vokes ; Cogia, Miss Harriet Coveney.

1877-1878. *The White Cat*. By E. L. BLANCHARD. *Cast*: Prince Natty, Miss Victoria Vokes ; Prince Nectar, Miss Jessie Vokes ; Prince Tremor, Mr Fred Vokes ; King Gnome, Mr Fawdon Vokes.

1878-1879. *Cinderella*. By E. L. BLANCHARD. *Cast*: Cinderella, Miss Victoria Vokes ; the Prince, Miss Jessie Vokes ; the Baron, Mr Fred Vokes ; Servant, Mr Fawdon Vokes ; the Ugly Sisters, Miss Julia Warden and Miss Hubspeth.

1879-1880. *Bluebeard*. By E. L. BLANCHARD (Augustus Harris's first pantomime). *Cast*: Fatima, Miss Victoria

Vokes ; Selim, Miss Jessie Vokes ; Bluebeard, Mr Fred Vokes ; Shacabac, Mr Fawdon Vokes ; Sister Anne, Mrs Fred Vokes.

1880-1881. *Mother Goose*. By E. L. BLANCHARD. *Cast* : Prince Florizel, Miss Kate Santley ; the Princess Bella, Miss Ada Blanche ; Dr Syntax, Mr Arthur Roberts ; Yokel, Mr James Fawn ; Young Time, Miss Carrie Coote ; Mother Goose, Little Addie Blanche.

1881-1882. *Robinson Crusoe*. By E. L. BLANCHARD. *Cast* : Robinson Crusoe, Miss Fanny Leslie ; Pollie, Miss Amalia ; Mrs Crusoe, Mr Arthur Roberts ; Mr Timothy Lovage, Mr James Fawn ; Will Atkins, Mr Harry Nicholls ; the Cockatoo, Mr Harry Jackson ; Luna, Miss Dot Mario ; Youth, Miss Minnie Mario.

1882-1883. *Sinbad*. By E. L. BLANCHARD. *Cast* : Sinbad, Miss Nellie Power ; Fatinitza, Miss Constance Loseby ; Captain Tralala, Miss Vesta Tilley ; Koolinari, Mr James Fawn ; Ali Mi, Mr Arthur Roberts ; Kabool, Mr Herbert Campbell ; Kohinoor, Miss Minnie Mario ; Attar Shool, Miss Dot Mario ; Kybosh Arabi Pasha, Mr Harry Jackson.

1883-1884. *Cinderella*. By E. L. BLANCHARD. *Cast* : Cinderella, Miss Kate Vaughan ; Prince Pastorelle, Miss Minnie Mario ; Pousette (his Attendant), Miss Dot Mario ; Baron, Mr Harry Parker ; Baroness, Miss M. A. Victor ; the Ugly Sisters, Mr Harry Nicholls and Mr Herbert Campbell ; General Sharpwitz, Mr Fred Storey.

1884-1885. *Dick Whittington*. By E. L. BLANCHARD. *Cast* : Dick Whittington, Miss Fanny Leslie ; Alice Fitzwarren, Miss Kate Munro ; Tom, Mr Harry Nicholls ; Eliza, Mr Herbert Campbell ; Zura, Miss Dot Mario ; Captain of the Ship, Miss Minnie Mario ; Cat, Mr Charles Lauri.

1885-1886. *Aladdin*. By E. L. BLANCHARD. *Cast* : Aladdin, Miss Grace Huntley ; Chee Kee, Miss Nellie Leamar ; Princess Badroulbador, Miss Kate Leamar ; the Widow Twankee, Mr Harry Nicholls ; Abanazar, Mr Herbert Campbell ; the Emperor of China, Mr Victor Stevens ; Kazrac, Mr Charles Lauri.

1886-1887. *The Forty Thieves*. By E. L. BLANCHARD. *Cast* : Ganem, Miss Edith Bruce ; Magician, Miss Connie Gilchrist ; Sinbad, Miss Minnie Mario ; Camaralzaman, Miss Dot Marlo ; Mrs Cassim, Miss M. A. Victor ; Cogia, Mr Herbert Campbell ; Ali Baba, Mr Harry Nicholls ; Ally Sloper, Mr Victor Stevens ; Cassim, Mr Robert Pateman ; the Donkey, Mr Charles Lauri.

1887-1888. *Puss in Boots*. By E. L. BLANCHARD. *Cast* : Joycelyn, Miss Wadman ; the Princess, Miss Letty Lind ; King and Queen, Mr Herbert Campbell and Mr Harry Nicholls ; Wicked Brothers, Mr Charles Danby and Mr Lionel Rignold ; Cat, Mr Charles Lauri.

1888-1889. *Babes in the Wood*. By E. L. BLANCHARD. *Cast* : Robin Hood, Miss Harriet Vernon ; Maid Marian, Miss Florence Dysart ; Will Scarlet, Miss Maggie Duggan ; the Babes, Mr Harry Nicholls and Mr Herbert Campbell ; the Wicked Uncle, Mr Victor Stevens ; the Wicked Aunt (his first pantomime here), Mr Dan Leno ; the Poodle, Mr Charles Lauri.

1889-1890. *Jack and the Beanstalk*. By E. L. BLANCHARD. *Cast* : Jack, Miss Harriet Vernon ; Oberin, Miss Agnes Hewitt ; Princess Diamond Duckz, Miss Maggie Duggan ; King Henry, Mr Harry Nicholls ; Queen Fanny the Flirt, Mr Herbert Campbell ; Mrs Simpson, Mr Dan Leno (their first association) ; Puck, Mr Charles Lauri.

1890-1891. *Beauty and the Beast*. By WILLIAM YARDLEY and AUGUSTUS HARRIS. *Cast* : Beauty, Lady Dunlo ;

King Courage, Miss Vesta Tilley; Sarah Ann, Mr Herbert Campbell; Mary Ann, Mr Harry Nicholls; Mr Lombard Street, Mr Dan Leno.

1891-1892. *Humpty Dumpty*. By AUGUSTUS HARRIS and HARRY NICHOLLS. *Cast*: Humpty Dumpty, Little Tich; King Dulcimar, Miss Fanny Leslie; Princess Allfair, Miss Marie Lloyd; King of Hearts, Mr Herbert Campbell; Queen of Hearts, Mr Dan Leno; Dancer, Miss Mabel Love.

1892-1893. *Little Bo-Peep*. By AUGUSTUS HARRIS and J. WILTON JONES. *Cast*: Boy Blue, Miss Ada Blanche; Red Riding Hood, Miss Marie Lloyd; Bo-Peep, Miss Marie Loftus; Daddy and Goody Thumb, Mr Dan Leno and Mr Herbert Campbell; Hop o' My Thumb, Little Tich; Dame Mary Quite Contrary, Mr Arthur Williams; Rinella, Miss Mabel Love.

1893-1894. *Robinson Crusoe*. By AUGUSTUS HARRIS and HARRY NICHOLLS. *Cast*: Robinson Crusoe, Miss Ada Blanche; Polly, Miss Marie Lloyd; Mrs Crusoe, Mr Dan Leno; Will Atkins, Mr Herbert Campbell; Man Friday, Little Tich.

1894-1895. *Dick Whittington*. By AUGUSTUS HARRIS, CECIL RALEIGH and HENRY HAMILTON. *Cast*: Dick Whittington, Miss Ada Blanche; Alice, Miss Marie Montrose; Idle Jack, Mr Dan Leno; Eliza the Cook, Mr Herbert Campbell; small parts were played by Mr Fawdon Vokes and Mr Joe Cave.

1895-1896. *Cinderella*. By AUGUSTUS HARRIS, CECIL RALEIGH and ARTHUR STURGESS. *Cast*: the Prince, Miss Ada Blanche; Cinderella, Miss Isa Bowman; Dandini, Miss Alexandra Dagmar; the Baron, Mr Herbert Campbell; the Baroness, Mr Dan Leno; the Tutor, Mr Lionel Rignold; the Ugly Sisters, Miss Sophie Larkin and Miss Emily Miller.

1896-1897. *Aladdin*. By ARTHUR STURGESS and HORACE LENNARD. *Cast*: Aladdin, Miss Ada Blanche; Princess Badroulbador, Miss Decima Moore; Sau-see, Miss Clara Jecks; Mrs Twankey, Mr Dan Leno; Abanazar, Mr Herbert Campbell; Slave of the Lamp, Mr Paul Cinquevalli.

1897-1898. *Babes in the Wood*. By ARTHUR STURGESS and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: Prince Paragon, Miss Ada Blanche; Marian, Miss Violet Robinson; Miss Gertie Girton, Miss Alice Barnett; Reggie, Mr Dan Leno; Chrissie, Mr Herbert Campbell.

1898-1899. *The Forty Thieves*. By ARTHUR STURGESS and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: Ganem, Miss Nellie Stewart; Hassan, Miss Rita Presano; Morgiana, Miss Amelia Stone; Abdallah, Mr Dan Leno; Zuleika, Mr Herbert Campbell; Ali Baba, Mr Johnnie Danvers; Cogia, Miss Lillie Belmore.

1899-1900. *Jack and the Beanstalk*. By ARTHUR STURGESS and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: Jack, Miss Nellie Stewart; Princess Pretty I., Miss Mabel Nelson; Dame Trot, Mr Dan Leno; Bobbie, Mr Herbert Campbell.

[Miss Nellie Stewart did not appear on Boxing Night and was replaced by Miss Mollie Lowell. Later on, Miss Violet Cameron took up the part of Jack.]

1900-1901. *The Sleeping Beauty and the Beast*. By J. HICKORY WOOD and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: Prince Caramel, Miss Elaine Ravensberg; Princess Beauty, Miss Madge Lessing; Queen Ravia, Mr Dan Leno; King Screwdaper, Mr Herbert Campbell; Nurse, Mr Fred Emney; Witch Malevolentia, Miss Alice Ainsley Cook.

1901-1902. *Bluebeard*. By J. HICKORY WOOD and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: Selim, Miss Elaine Ravensberg; Fatima, Miss Julia Franks; Bluebeard, Mr Herbert Campbell;

Sister Ann, Mr Dan Leno ; Mustapha, Mr Fred Emney ; Hassarac, Mr Lawrence Caird ; Shacabac, Little Zola.

1902-1903. *Mother Goose*. By J. HICKORY WOOD and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: Colin, Miss Maud Beatty ; Jill, Miss Madge Lessing ; Gretchen, Miss Marie George ; Mother Goose, Mr Dan Leno ; Jack, Mr Herbert Campbell ; Mayor of Japham, Mr Fred Emney ; the Laird, Mr Lawrence Caird ; Goose, Mr Arthur Conquest ; Alexander, Little Zola.

1903-1904. *Humpty Dumpty*. By J. HICKORY WOOD and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: Humpty Dumpty, Miss Louise Willis ; Blossom, Miss Marie George ; King, Mr Herbert Campbell ; Queen, Mr Dan Leno ; Cook, Mr Harry Randall ; Randolph, Miss Ruth Lytton ; Peter, Mr George Bastow ; Scarecrow, Mr Hugh Ward.

[Miss George was compelled by indisposition to retire from the cast and was replaced by Miss Mabel Love.]

1904-1905. *The White Cat*. By J. HICKORY WOOD and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: Prince Peerless, Miss Queenie Leighton ; Cupid, Miss Marie George ; Prince Patter, Mr James Welch ; Prince Plumett, Mr Fred Eastman ; Simeon, Mr Hugh Ward ; Populo, Mr Tom Wootwell ; Fairy Asbestos, Mr Harry Randall ; Aristio, Miss Ruth Lytton ; Snale, Mr Tom Hearn.

1905-1906. *Cinderella*. By F. C. BURNAND, J. HICKORY WOOD and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: Prince Jasper, Miss Queenie Leighton ; Cinderella, Miss May de Sousa ; Baroness de Bluff, Mr Walter Passmore ; Alfonso, Mr Harry Randall ; Baron de Bluff, Mr Arthur Williams ; the Ugly Sisters, Miss Pollie Emery and Miss Emily Spiller ; Dandini, Harry Fragon ; Growler, Mr Tom Wootwell.

1906-1907. *Sinbad*. By J. HICKORY WOOD and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: Hindbad, Miss Queenie Leighton; Ruby, Miss Marie George; Sinbad, Mr Walter Passmore; Empress of all the Saharas, Mr Fred Emney; Envoy to the Empress, Mr Harry Fragon.

1907-1908. *The Babes in the Wood*. By J. HICKORY WOOD and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: Robin Hood, Miss Agnes Fraser; Maid Marian, Miss Madge Vincent; Reggie and Cissie, Mr Walter Passmore and Miss Marie George; the Baroness, Mr Neil Kenyon; the Governess, Mr Harry Fragon; the Baron, Mr Lennox Pawle; Giants, the Pender Troupe.

1908-1909. *Dick Whittington*. By J. HICKORY WOOD and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: Dick Whittington, Miss Queenie Leighton; Alice, Miss Marie Wilson; Katrina, Miss Marie George; Pedio, Prince of Shantasia, Miss Truly Shattuck; Idle Jack, Mr Wilkie Bard; Alderman Fitzwarren, Mr Johnnie Danvers; Will Wathless, Mr Aubrey Fitzgerald.

[Mr Neil Kenyon was cast for the part of Alderman Fitzwarren, but pleaded a nervous breakdown and retired.]

1909-1910. *Aladdin*. By F. C. BURNAND, J. HICKORY WOOD and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: Aladdin, Miss Marie George; Princess Badroulbador, Miss Ida Rene; Prince Pekoe, Miss Truly Shattuck; Abanazar, Mr George Graves; Widow Twankee, Mr Wilkie Bard; Bolo the Dog, Mr George Ali.

1910-1911. *Jack and the Beanstalk*. By J. HICKORY WOOD, FRANK DIX and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: Jack, Miss Dolly Castles; Princess Dorothy, Miss Julia James; Mrs Hallybut, Mr George Graves; Prince Spinach, Mr Harry Randall; Rupert Hallybut, Mr George Barrett; Uncle Tom Cobbly, Mr Austin Melford; Alexis the Page, Mr Barry Lupino.

1911-1912. *Hop o' My Thumb*. By FRANK DIX and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: Hilario, Miss Violet Loraine; Zaza, Miss Daisy Dormer; Hop, Miss Renee Meyer; King of Mnemonica, Mr George Graves; Potterini, Mr Will Evans; Smilia, Mr Barry Lupino; John the Woodcutter, Mr Austin Melford; Giant, Mr Frederick Ross.

[Miss Fanny Brough, who should have played Princess Chicot, was, for the most part, replaced by Miss Alice Esden.]

1912-1913. *The Sleeping Beauty*. By GEORGE R. SIMS, C. H. BOVILL and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: Auriol, Mr Wilfrid Douthitt; Princess Marcella, Miss Florence Smithson; the Duke of Monte Blanco, Mr George Graves; Pompos, Mr Will Evans; Finnykin, Mr Barry Lupino; Puck, Miss Renee Meyer; Duke Nemo, Mr Charles Rock; Blake and Holmes (detectives), the Poluskis.

1913-1914. *The Sleeping Beauty Reawakened*. By GEORGE R. SIMS and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: Auriol, Mr Wilfrid Douthitt; Princess Marcella, Miss Florence Smithson; the Duke of Monte Blanco, Mr George Graves; Pompos, Mr Will Evans; Finnykin, Mr Stanley Lupino; Puck, Miss Renee Meyer; Duke Nemo, Mr Forrester Harvey.

1914-1915. *The Sleeping Beauty Beautified*. By GEORGE R. SIMS and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: Auriol, Mr Bertram Wallis; Princess Marcella, Miss Ferne Rogers; the Duke of Monte Blanco, Mr George Graves; Pompos, Mr Will Evans; Finnykin, Mr Stanley Lupino; Puck, Miss Renee Meyer; Duke Nemo, Mr Forrester Harvey.

1915-1916. *Puss in Boots*. By GEORGE R. SIMS, FRANK DIX and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: Florian, Mr Eric Marshall; Princess Rosabel, Miss Florence Smithson; Puss in Boots, Miss Renee Meyer; the Grand Duchess of Cerulea, Mr George Graves; the Grand Duke, Mr Will Evans; Polydor, Mr Stanley Lupino.

- 1916-1917. *Puss in New Boots*. By GEORGE R. SIMS, FRANK DIX and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: Florian, Miss Madge Titheradge; Rosabel, Miss Florence Smithson; the Grand Duchess of Cerulea, Mr Robert Hale; the Grand Duchess, Mr Will Evans; Polydor, Mr Stanley Lupino; Puss in Boots, Miss Lennie Deane.
- 1917-1918. *Aladdin*. By FREDERIC ANSTEY, FRANK DIX and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: Aladdin, Miss Madge Titheradge; Princess Badroulbador, Miss Daisy Bindley; Abanazar, Mr Robert Hale; the Widow Tankey, Mr Stanley Lupino; Slave of the Ring, Mr Will Evans.
- 1918-1919. *Babes in the Wood*. By FRANK DIX and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: Lord Fairplay, Miss Marie Blanche; Joy, Miss Florence Smithson; Horace and Flossie (the Babes), Mr Stanley Lupino and Mr Will Evans; Mrs Skinner, Miss Lily Long; the Robbers, the Brothers Egbert.
- 1919-1920. *Cinderella*. By FRANK DIX and ARTHUR COLLINS. *Cast*: the Prince, Miss Marie Blanche; Cinderella, Miss Florence Smithson; Dandini, M. du Calion; the Baron, Mr Harry Claff; the Baroness, Mr Will Evans; Page, Mr Stanley Lupino; the Ugly Sisters, Miss Lily Long and Mr C. Denier Warren.

APPENDIX II

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN OPERA

Trial by Jury: Royalty Theatre, 25th March 1875. 125 performances. *Cast*: the Learned Judge, Mr F. Sullivan; the Plaintiff, Miss Nellie Bromley; the Defendant, Mr Walter Fisher; Counsel for the Plaintiff, Mr Hollingsworth; Usher, Mr Kelleher; Foreman of the Jury, Mr Campbell; Associate, First Bridesmaid.

Revivals: Strand Theatre, 3rd March 1877; Opera Comique, 25th March 1878; Savoy, 11th October 1884; 22nd September 1898.

The Sorcerer: Opera Comique, 17th November 1877. 175 performances. *Cast*: Sir Marmaduke Pointdextre, Mr Richard Temple; Alexis, Mr George Bentham; Dr Daly, Mr Rutland Barrington; Notary, Mr F. Clifton; John Wellington Wells, Mr George Grossmith; Lady Sangazure, Mrs Howard Paul; Aline, Miss Alice May; Mrs Partlett, Miss Everard; Constance, Miss Giulia Warwick.

Revivals: Savoy, 11th October 1884; 22nd September 1898.

H.M.S. Pinafore: Opera Comique, 25th May 1878. 700 performances. *Cast*: the Right Hon. Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B., Mr George Grossmith; Captain Corcoran, Mr Rutland Barrington; Ralph Rackstraw, Mr George Power; Dick Deadeye, Mr Richard Temple; Bill Bobstay, Mr Clifton; Bob Bckett, Mr Dymott; Josephine, Miss Alice May; Hebe, Miss Jessie Bond; Little Buttercup, Miss Everard.

Revivals: Opera Comique, 12th November 1887; Savoy, 6th June 1899; 14th July 1908.

The Pirates of Penzance: Opera Comique, 3rd April 1880. 363 performances. *Cast*: Major-General Stanley, Mr

George Grossmith; the Pirate King, Mr Richard Temple; Samuel, his lieutenant, Mr George Temple; Frederick, Mr George Power; Sergeant of Police, Mr Rutland Barrington; Mabel, Miss Marion Hood; Edith, Miss Jessie Bond; Kate, Miss Julia Gwynne; Isabel, Miss M. Barlow; Ruth, Miss Alice Barnett.

Revivals: Opera Comique, 17th March 1888; Savoy, 13th June 1900; 1st December 1908.

Patience: Opera Comique, 23rd April 1881. 578 performances. *Cast*: Reginald Bunthorne, Mr George Grossmith; Archibald Grosvenor, Mr Rutland Barrington; Colonel Calverley, Mr Walter Browne; Major Murgatroyd, Mr Frank Thornton; Lieutenant the Duke of Dunstable, Mr Durward Lely; the Lady Angela, Miss Jessie Bond; the Lady Saphir, Miss Julia Gwynne; the Lady Ella, Miss Fortescue; the Lady Jane, Miss Alice Barnett; *Patience*, Miss Leonora Braham.

Revivals: Savoy, 10th October 1881 (opening of that theatre); 7th November 1900; 4th April 1907.

Iolanthe: Savoy, 25th November 1882. 398 performances. *Cast*: the Lord Chancellor, Mr George Grossmith; Earl of Mount Ararat, Mr Rutland Barrington; Earl Tolloller, Mr Durward Lely; Private Willis, Mr Charles Manners; Strephon, Mr R. Temple; Queen of the Fairies, Miss Alice Barnett; *Iolanthe*, Miss Jessie Bond; Celia, Miss Fortescue; Leila, Miss Julia Gwynne; Fleta, Miss Sybil Grey; Phyllis, Miss Leonora Braham.

Revivals: 7th December 1901; 11th June 1907; 19th October 1908.

Princess Ida: Savoy, 5th January 1884. 246 performances. *Cast*: King Hildebrand, Mr Rutland Barrington; Hilarion, Mr Bracy; Cyril, Mr Durward Lely; Florian, Mr Charles Ryley; King Gama, Mr George Grossmith; Arac, Mr R. Temple; Guron, Mr Warwick Grey; Scynthua, Mr Lugg; *Princess Ida*, Miss Leonora

Braham; Lady Blanche, Miss Brandram; Lady Psyche, Miss Kate Chard; Melissa, Miss Jessie Bond; Sacharissa, Miss Sybil Grey; Chloe, Miss Heathcote; Ada, Miss Lilian Carr.

The Mikado: Savoy, 14th March 1885. 672 performances.

Cast: the Mikado of Japan, Mr R. Temple; Nanki Poo, Mr Durward Lely; Ko-Ko, Mr George Grossmith; Pooh Bah, Mr Rutland Barrington; Pish-Tush, Mr Frederick Bovill; Yum Yum, Miss Leonora Braham; Pitti Sing, Miss Jessie Bond; Peep Bo, Miss Sybil Grey; Katisha, Miss Rosina Brandram.

Revivals: 7th June 1888; 6th November 1895; 27th May 1896; 28th April 1908.

Ruddigore: Savoy, 22nd January 1887. 283 performances.

Cast: Robin Oakapple, Mr George Grossmith; Richard Dauntless, Mr Durward Lely; Sir Despard Murgatroyd, Mr Rutland Barrington; Old Adam Goodheart, Mr Rudolph Lewis; Rose Maybud, Miss Leonora Braham; Mad Margaret, Miss Jessie Bond; Dame Hannah, Miss Rosina Brandram; Zorah, Miss Josephine Findlay; Ruth, Miss Lindsay.

The Yeoman of the Guard: Savoy, 3rd October 1888. 423 performances.

Cast: Sir Richard Cholmondeley, Mr W. Brownlow; Colonel Fairfax, Mr Courtice Pounds; Sergeant Meryll, Mr Richard Temple; Leonard Meryll, Mr W. R. Shirley; Jack Point, Mr George Grossmith; Wilfred Shadbolt, Mr W. H. Denny; the Headsman, Mr Richards; First Yeoman, Mr Wilbraham; Second Yeoman, Mr Medcalf; Third Yeoman, Mr Merton; Fourth Yeoman, Mr Rudolph Lewis; First Citizen, Mr Redmond; Second Citizen, Mr Boyd; Elsie Maynard, Miss Geraldine Ulmar; Phoebe Meryll, Miss Jessie Bond; Dame Carruthers, Miss Rosina Brandram; Kate, Miss Rose Hervey.

Revivals: 5th May 1897; 8th December 1906; 1st March 1909.

The Gondoliers : Savoy, 7th December 1889. 554 performances. *Cast* : the Duke of Plaza Toro, Mr Frank Wyatt ; Luiz, Mr Brownlow ; Don Alhambra del Bolero, Mr Denny ; Marco Palmieri, Mr Courtice Pounds ; Giuseppe Palmieri, Mr Rutland Barrington ; Antonio, Mr Medcalf ; Francesco, Mr Rose ; Giorgio, Mr de Pledge ; Annibale, Mr Wilbraham ; Ottavio, Mr C. Gilbert ; the Duchess of Plaza Toro, Miss Rosina Brandram ; Casilda, Miss Decima Moore ; Gianetta, Miss Geraldine Ulmar ; Iessa, Miss Jessie Bond ; Fiammetta, Miss Lawrence ; Vittoria, Miss Cole ; Giulia, Miss Phyllis ; Inez, Miss Bernard.

Revivals : Savoy, 22nd March 1898 ; 18th July 1898 ; 22nd January 1907 ; 18th January 1909.

Utopia Limited : Savoy, 7th October 1893. 245 performances. *Cast* : King Paramount the First, Mr Rutland Barrington ; Scaphio, Mr W. H. Denny ; Phantis, Mr John Le Hay ; Tarara, Mr Walter Passmore ; Calyux, Mr Bowden Haswell ; Lord Dramaleigh, Mr Scott Russell ; Captain Fitzbattle-axe, Mr Charles Kenningham ; Captain Sir Edward Corcoran, Mr Laurence Gridley ; Mr Goldbury, Mr Scott Fishe ; Sir Bailey Barre, Q.C., M.P., Mr E. Blackmore ; Mr Blushington, Mr Herbert Balland ; the Princess Zara, Miss Nancy Mackintosh ; the Princess Nekaya, Miss Emmie Owen ; the Princess Kalyba, Miss Florence Perry ; the Lady Sophy, Miss Rosina Brandram ; Salata, Miss Edith Johnston ; Melene, Miss May Bell ; Phylla, Miss Florence Easton.

The Grand Duke : Savoy, 7th March 1896. 123 performances. *Cast* : Rudolph, Mr Walter Passmore ; Ernest Dummkopf, Mr C. Kenningham ; Ludwig, Mr Rutland Barrington ; Dr Tannhauser, Mr Scott Russell ; the Prince of Monte Carlo, Mr Scott Fishe ; Viscount Mentone, Mr Carlton ; Ben Hashbaz, Mr Workman ; Herald,

Mr Jones Hewson ; the Princess of Monte Carlo, Miss Emmie Owen ; the Baroness von Krakenfeldt, Miss Rosina Brandram ; Julia Jellicoe, Madame Ilka von Palmay ; Lisa, Miss Florence Perry ; Olga, Miss Mildred Baker ; Gretchen, Miss Ruth Vincent ; Bertha, Miss Jessie Rose ; Elsa, Miss Ethel Wilson ; Martha, Miss Beatrice Perry.

APPENDIX III

THEATRE ASSESSMENTS

<i>Theatre</i>	1911		1916		1921	
Adelphi . .	{ 4520 3767 }	{ 1330 1108 }	4500 3750	{ 4500 3750 }	{ 1500 1250 }	
Aldwych . .	4500 3750	3000 2500		{ 3900 3250 }	{ 600 500 }	
Apollo . .	5500 4584	4000 3384		5500 4584		
Ambassadors .		1000 834		2000 1667		
Comedy . .	4500 3750	3500 2917		4500 3750		
Coronet . .	860 717					
Criterion . .	3500 2917			4000 3334		
Court . .	1400 1167	900 750		1200 1000		
Covent Garden .	5950 4959			6750 5625		
Daly's . .	6150 5125	4500 3750		6500 5417		
Drury Lane .	7000 5834	5500 4584		{ 1160 967 }	{ 6340 5284 }	
Duke of York's .	4500 3750	3750 3125		4500 3750		
Gaiety . .	7000 5834	5000 4167		7000 5834		
Globe . .	5750 4792	4000 3334		5500 4584		
Garrick . .	5000 4167	4000 3334		5000 4167		
Haymarket .	5400 4500	4500 3750		5500 4584		
His Majesty's .	6975 5813	5500 4584		7000 5834		
Kingsway . .	1000 834	1000 834		1500 1250		
Little . .	1440 1200	900 750		1600 1334		

<i>Theatre</i>	1911		1916		1921	
Lyric . . .	5500	4584	4000	3334	5500	4584
London Opera House	8400	7000	5000	4167	9000	7500
Lyceum . . .	{ 4900 600 }	{ 4084 500 }	4000	3334	{ 5350 650 }	{ 4459 542 }
New . . .	4500	3750	3750	3125	4500	3750
Playhouse . .	4074	3395	2250	1909	4000	3334
Prince of Wales's	5500	4584	4000	3334	5500	4584
Prince's . . .	1938	1615	1938	1615	2500	2084
Queen's . . .	5750	4792	4000	3334	5500	4584
Royalty . . .	1800	1500			2000	1667
St James's . .	4500	3750	4000	3334	5000	4167
Savoy . . .	3000	2500	2000	1667	3000	2500
Scala . . .			800	667	880	774
Shaftesbury .	5000	4167	4000	3334	5500	4584
Strand . . .	4750	3809	3000	2500	{ 2900 2100 }	{ 2417 1750 }
Vaudeville . .	{ 2900 100 }	{ 2417 84 }	2500	2084	{ 100 3200 }	{ 84 2667 }
Wyndham's . .	4250	3500	3750	3125	4500	3750
St Martin's .			2000	1667	2750	2292

NOTE.—The columns represent the valuation; and the lesser amount on which the rate is levied.

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